

CRAFT AND CONTROL:  
NETWORKS, STRATEGIES AND ORDERING  
IN  
NEW ZEALAND BEEKEEPING

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## ABSTRACT

The thesis documents the strategies of participants presently composing the New Zealand beekeeping 'industry'. It locates the different ways in which the participants engage in and across fora constituting the National Beekeepers' Association (the NBA), and have differential access to information and resources. It is argued that their engagement in struggles over control of national strategies in beekeeping are represented in the form of shifting interests and multiple capacities fostered by the current de-regulated environment. Organising the craft of beekeeping is, thus, conceived as a series of games between overlapping sets of participants. The presentation of the thesis allows for relations between participants to be traced across the different games, illuminating patterns in how they are representing themselves and understanding their respective work, and the ways in which their strategies intersect to reshape the NBA.

The thesis also considers ways in which local idiosyncrasies of beekeeping environments produce regional variability. In turn, this variability in craft practice allows for the creation of innovative products based on local or regional properties, and has become a source of strength in the global marketplace. It is argued that regional scales of action, co-ordinated via regional Branches of the NBA, are likely to become more and more differentiated from national strategies implemented through the national body.

These regional developments are facilitated by the emergence of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in beekeeping. The new technologies are presently effecting novel forms of interaction among certain participants sharing particular sets of skills. The thesis argues that rather than substituting for physical co-presence, ICTs are more likely to invigorate 'real'/regional settings and to re-affirm the value of face-to-face fora in beekeeping.

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## INTRODUCTION

This thesis arises out of my experiences carrying out research as both an 'insider' and 'outsider' in beekeeping. It relates these experiences with what is presently unfolding in beekeeping in the context of free-trade philosophies, and with strategies being deployed by participants (or players) ordering themselves across various fora. As a beekeeper's daughter, past beekeeping employee, and social scientist, I was perceived differently by different participants and could be availed upon both an asset and a liability. Like other participants in 'the industry', I too had shifting identities and multiple capacities. This depended on how my role(s) were perceived by others and the categories they deployed to ally me with certain individuals and groups. It follows that my thesis is as an exercise in 'multi-sited' research, immersing me with the participants and materials I chose to study in different ways and across several socio-spatial locations.

The thesis works through different aspects of relations between producers, pollinators, packers, marketers, administrators, research scientists, and government officials composing 'the beekeeping industry'. The players have co-operative links with each other in order to carry out their work and to co-ordinate national scales of action in beekeeping via the National Beekeepers' Association (NBA). Active members of the NBA are predominantly large-scale commercial producers who comprise a small proportion of the total number of beekeepers in New Zealand; yet own the majority of hives and are responsible for the bulk of honey that is produced. Only 20% (955) of beekeepers were classified as 'commercial' as at June 1999 and these beekeepers owned 96% of hives (MAF figures). The remaining 80% keep bees as a hobby and produce sufficient honey for private use. Most commercial producers start out as hobbyists or inherit their hives from family members. A number are also honey packers. Packers (or brands) pack their own honey and/or honey supplied to them by producers and distribute these in retail packs, often under their own brand-name(s). Packers therefore depend on producers for the supply of honey and perform marketing activities. There are

a number of tensions in being both a packer and producer, and some of these are illuminated in the thesis.

A larger proportion of 'hobbyists' compose the NBA since the 'commercial' threshold for honey production was lowered in 1996. The Bee Products Commodity Levies Order 1996, pursuant to the Commodity Levies Act 1990, enabled players to redefine 'commercial' production from 50 hives to more than 10 hives on three or more apiaries. This means previously 'hobbyist' beekeepers now pay a membership levy to the Association. It also means that players in beekeeping who specialise in honey packing or marketing activities do not pay a levy to the National Association. The levy is used by national position holders to fund administration, disease control and, since 1992, marketing activities of the NBA. In actuality, most *commercial* producers manage at least 500 hives depending on the geographical area or areas where they keep their bees. The largest operation runs 12000 hives in the Waikato region, and a Hawkes Bay affiliate runs 5000 hives. Both operations co-ordinate their own packing and marketing activities.

The written rules of the NBA establish five categories of membership. These categories enforce a hierarchy between players that is played out in and across the various settings explored in the thesis. They are used by players to define each others' interests and needs in beekeeping and, consequently, to position each other in and across beekeeping fora. It will be seen, however, that these membership categories translate differently *in practice*. Rituals of membership take form, and are continually renegotiated by players, in face-to-face interaction. The written rules also provide for an Executive of six elected members, three from the North Island and three from the South Island, and an Executive Secretary. Together, these players are ultimately responsible for implementing national strategies in beekeeping and administering 'the Association's' finances. Members on 'the Executive' preside for two years and can be re-elected at the end of their terms. These are voluntary positions. The Executive Secretary is the only full-time and paid position in the NBA, and is typically a non-member of the Association.

According to the NBA rules, *ordinary* members are those who either do not own beehives, or who are not obliged to pay an apiary levy because their hive holdings are beneath the threshold. *Commercial* members are 'beekeepers' obligated to pay a graduated apiary levy because they own more than 10 hives on three or more apiary sites. *Life* memberships are bestowed on players who are highly respected by 'beekeepers' because they are attributed with superior knowledge and practical know-how of keeping bees. It is experiential knowledge amassed over time by these players 'lifting the lids of beehives' which compels them into these positions. It will be argued in the thesis that great emphasis is attributed to long-standing association with beekeeping. Being at least a second or third generation beekeeper is often crucial to being labeled a 'beekeeper'. Life members are nominated by players in regional branch meetings, and these nominations are confirmed at National Conference of the NBA.

There are also *associate* members, specialist beekeeping organisations who are given the same 'rights' and 'privileges' of *ordinary* members. *Honorary* memberships can also be bestowed on individuals as 'marks of esteem' and in 'recognition of services to the New Zealand beekeeping industry'. The written rules provide that *honorary* members, as with *life* members, need not be actual members of the Association, although 'shall enjoy the [same] rights and privileges of ordinary members'. In practice, *honorary* members tend to be 'outside' players like government Apicultural Advisory Officers (AAOs) and research scientists. Moreover, the 'rights' and 'privileges' associated with membership to each category are reshaped through patterns of interaction between sets of players translating into tacit understandings of each others' skills, knowledge and experiences in beekeeping.

Participants composing 'the beekeeping industry' engage in and across several socio-spatial settings, contesting their respective interests vis-a-vis other players, and pursuing disparate strategies to lever control. The thesis is arranged into chapters which represent some of the settings in which these processes take place. Each chapter can be conceived as a distinct configuration of individuals and groups which, nevertheless, overlap because relations between players cut across each of the settings. Chapters two and

three, in particular, illustrate Bourdieu's notion of *fields* through unfolding relations between individuals and groups in meeting contexts. These two chapters illustrate particular systems of objective relations between positions occupied by players in shared social space (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:97).

Participants are understood as 'players' because beekeeping is constructed as a series of complex games between sets of participants. Each game is like an open field in sport where players "oppose one another, sometimes with ferocity, only to the extent that they concur in their belief (doxa) in the game and its stakes" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:98). The players participate in each game through recognition and knowledge of the social and economic conditions of their work which functions like a form of practical sense (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:105, 120). Bourdieu terms this *habitus*, that is, a socially constituted 'sense of the game' which endows players with an inherent disposition or instinct of knowing how to act in particular situations or contexts (ibid., 120). *Habitus* makes the very existence of the field (or game) possible at the same time as enabling players to participate. In other words, it is knowledge taken for granted or embodied by players which underlies their relations and tactics, and forms a basis on which conventional understandings of the craft of beekeeping can be built.

The players vie for control through deploying different rhetorical strategies shaped by their relative positions in each field (or game) and their knowledge of the particular stakes on offer. They are wanting to secure credibility for their respective work and to enforce specific interests. This entails imposing their own 'objectivity' or 'neutrality' in the fields (Bourdieu, 1993:76, Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:257). The interests and needs of players initially position them in each field, but become an effect or product of that positioning. This means that their ordering strategies are contingent upon their existing positions. Indeed, players "can play...in conformity with the tacit rules of the game...but can also get in it to transform, partially or completely, the immanent rules of the game" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:99). They have varying degrees of success because their abilities to participate depend on the 'species of *capital*' they possess or are seen to

possess (Bourdieu, 1993; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Species of *capital* initially position players in each field (or game), and enable them to exert some influence (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:98). *Capital* operates like a form of power or wealth, accumulated in the course of previous struggles, which orients subsequent strategies intended to increase or conserve that power or wealth. It follows that species of *capital* also define players' capacities to form links with other players holding equivalent positions to their own and, thereby, to regroup. Thus, the structure of each field or game is always a *state* of power relations among players engaged in the struggle at particular points in time (Bourdieu, 1993:73):

Those who dominate in a given field are in a position to make it function to their advantage, but they must always contend with the resilience, the claims, the contention, "political" or otherwise of the dominated (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:102).

Formal positions holders, for instance, are well-placed to pronounce on the interpretation of 'NBA rules' and to define and appropriate the stakes being offered, especially via National Conference. Their interests "lie in conserving what is produced in the [national] field, and in so doing to conserve themselves" (Bourdieu, 1993:74). These players can espouse 'discourses of orthodoxy', but also have the freedom to innovate with 'formal' processes and 'official' procedures which tend to be regarded as immanent laws of the field (Bourdieu, 1993:72,73). This is due to formal positions bestowing on role occupants forms of symbolic *capital* which can be deployed "as both a weapon and as a stake of struggle" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:98). However, formal position holders have to contend with others players in on-going struggles for monopoly over the use of 'legitimate violence', especially in the national field (Bourdieu, 1993:73). Other players possess different species of *capital* which shape their ordering strategies. Players like marketers and packers, for example, arguably possess greater economic *capital*. As a result, they can adopt strategies with the hope of inducing formal position players to act in their interests or to espouse 'discourses of orthodoxy', at least until they can regain control over national strategies (Bourdieu, 1993:73). These players may assume dominant positions in regional branch meetings as bearers of



'new' information through active participation in electronic-mail distribution lists. Their species of *capital* are also symbolic because other players may regard them as having privileged access to information.

As a *producers'* association, the NBA is a relatively informal, democratic and horizontally administered organisation. It is constituted by patterns of strong and weak ties between a broad range of players with increasingly diverse and multiple interests. Together, these players negotiate shared understandings of New Zealand beekeeping in and across the different settings. Consequently, the NBA is recognised in the thesis as a constantly evolving entity fashioned and reshaped by sets of players through social interaction. Human actors are ultimately responsible for creating and recreating what they witness as 'structures' guiding their actions and shaping their beliefs and interests. How 'organisational forms' come to be collectively perceived by players and attributed with a momentum and agency of their own are explored in the thesis. It is through engaging with each other in and across the fields that players assign order and meaning to the craft of beekeeping, and purport to understand or resurrect their places and roles within it. They create 'organisations', devise written 'rules', allocate 'formal' roles, and bestow categorical identities, as part of endless attempts at ordering their relations. It is out of these processes that players collectively embody and perform what they see as 'the NBA', and this is equated with 'the beekeeping industry' itself. Becker notes, however, and this thesis will follow his argument, that in the co-operative activity of participants words like organisation and structure exist "only as *shorthand* for the notion of networks of people cooperating" (Becker, 1982:35).

The thesis also contemplates ways in which players distinguish their work from other individuals and groups who are seen as 'outsiders', such as land owners, hobbyist beekeepers, government officers, and research scientists. These are attempts to attribute order and clarity in their own work; whereby creating and reworking *conventions* to define, characterise, and regulate *commercial* beekeeping work (Becker, 1982). Conventions facilitate local, regional and national scales of action in beekeeping through representing for players a "body of conventional understandings [which] make

[their] collective activity simpler and less costly in time, energy, and other resources" (Becker, 1982:34-35). These understandings enable players to coordinate their interests in the fields through tacit knowledge of game plans and the stakes being offered. Membership categories, for example, are provoked by established conventions and equate with attempts to attribute order and meaning to the work of others. They are mechanisms defining particular sets of skills and competencies, as well as for anticipating players' strategies in and across the fields.

It is through labelling certain others as 'outsiders' or sorting people into useful categories that players come to understand their work and develop rhetorical devices to represent themselves and their local contexts. Consequently, the thesis is also about undoing the categories players create to distinguish their work because participants "typically have intimate and extensive relations with the worlds from which they try to distinguish themselves" (Becker, 1982:36). Becker suggests that "a sociological analysis should take account of how they are not so separate after all" (ibid.). The thesis also happens to be an exercise in ordering because sets of players are regrouped under titles, such as 'wasps' and 'beekeepers'. This is for the purposes of understanding and elucidating different ordering strategies of players. Boundaries are formed between the interests of individuals and groups, even though these interests may frequently overlap. Nonetheless, the thesis attempts to show how boundaries are mutable and that players possess multiple capacities which cut across the different settings. Players act out multiple interests and shifting identifies depending on whom they happen to be relating to and the particular contexts in which this interaction takes place.

Co-operative links between players composing the 'beekeeping industry' are formed around the activity of producing on the part of 'beekeepers' embedded in local environments. Such links are essential for players to perform their work and reflect conventional understandings; yet they at once constrain and empower the kinds of products that can ultimately be produced (Becker, 1982:26). The sorts of constraints and opportunities players present to each other become embodied in game strategies and in the state of power relations characterising each of the fields. It is argued that co-operative links

between players affect their species of *capital* possessed in the fields and help constitute *habitus* pertinent to each field. Becker observes that,

A system of conventions gets embodied in equipment, materials, training, available facilities and sites, systems of notation, and the like, all of which must be changed if any one component is (1982:32).

This creates a multiplex network of interdependent ties between players variously embedded in local, regional and national scales of action, and whose interests and needs are shaped by their positioning in fields or games vis-à-vis each other. In such a network, individual players can to varying extents be substituted by others who share similar knowledge of conventions characterising the work, and who are endowed with *habitus*, without necessarily disrupting game plans (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:106; Becker, 1982).

Players in beekeeping are presently reshaping conventions regulating commercial work in the current context of free-trade. 'Beekeepers', as *honey producers*, have traditionally been less concerned with marketing and distribution activities in performing their work, and have previously delegated these responsibilities to various marketing organisations. The free trade environment is, however, enabling and forcing 'beekeepers' to become more active in these activities. Commercial beekeepers, for instance, are currently experiencing tensions between expanding existing operations to take up opportunities presented by the global marketplace, and being *honey producers*. They are finding it necessary to become increasingly multi-skilled and this may be at the expense of actual production and hive management. On the other hand, management has the potential to enhance efficiency in these areas. Free-trade philosophies are reflected in practices of players presently developing and marketing mono-floral honey varieties and innovative value-added products. These players are diversifying their existing operations or choosing to specialise in particular activities. They need to increase or conserve access to global markets in order to survive. This requires a capacity on their part for flexibility and adaptability that allows for inventiveness and ingenuity (Clark and Williams, 1995).

Changing practices and evolving interests of players spark departures from established conventions negotiated and renegotiated through previous struggles in the fields. Reworking existing conventions affords players freedom to choose unconventional alternatives and to secure competitive advantages. Put another way, it maximises their individual autonomy and room for manoeuvre in performing their work (Becker:1982:34). It also means, however, that greater resources are needed by players to fund their work and that they subsequently seek validation of their activities in official settings. For packers and marketers, the limitations posed by conventional practices based on production work may render the price of doing things differently too high to manage themselves (Becker, 1982:33). Hence, their strategies in and across the fields prompt reflexive appraisal of the role and purposes of having a *producers'* association on the part of other players. Their actions reconstitute the 'National Association' through effecting a transformation of the beekeeping fields. These players are labelled 'wasps', and are invariably previous position holders on 'the Executive' and/or past and present members of national sub-committees and specialist association groups.

Chapter one locates the practice of players who 'lift the lids of beehives' in local environments. Unlike other chapters, this chapter focuses on the knowledge of a particular group of players, namely honey *producers*. It explores some of the dynamics involved in producing honey for a living, and considers what constitutes a successful beekeeper. 'Beekeepers' develop craft knowledge not only through identifying with the insects they farm and being able to manage naturally occurring phenomena, but also in negotiation with human actors. They operate in particular local contexts and grow accustomed to local conditions, including local farming practices, because these influence how they manage their bees and ways in which they can go about attaining productivity from them. Thus, chapter one contemplates the significance of *local* idiosyncrasies shaping beekeeping practice and craft know-how, and adopts a case study of the Canterbury region which has traditionally been a honey producing area. For comparative purposes, reference is made to the Bay

of Plenty region, presently a pollinating area, to emphasise regional variability in beekeeping.

The chapter is also about the ways in which ‘beekeepers’ purport to understand themselves in relation to certain others, such as land owners, whom they label as ‘outsiders’. It identifies a rhetoric on the part of ‘beekeepers’, whereby these players represent themselves as rugged individualists with an affinity for nature. The phrase “those who lift the lids of beehives”, deployed at National Conference by the current National President, encapsulates this rhetoric. It conjures a visual image of a veiled ‘man’ invariably bearded and toughened physically and mentally by the demands of the work. [In practice, some beekeepers do not adorn veils or even overalls. They purport to know their bees well, and perceive when a veil and other protective clothing is unnecessary.] The image is re-enacted at various functions of the National Association because beekeepers physically embody their work, and transmit craft skills largely through talk and ‘live’ demonstrations in face-to-face settings.

The national forum for beekeeping is an annual winter affair. It represents a dominant event on players’ calendars whether they choose to attend or not. Those who do not attend National Conference expect to hear of what takes place in regional branch meetings and through communications with other local players after Conference. This is because National Conference is regarded by many players as the primary locale in which beekeeping gets organised. It is considered *the* forum in which decisions are made and controversies are physically acted out. Conference is keenly awaited or dreaded by all players, especially those who want to exercise control over national strategies in beekeeping. It is also a setting where ‘beekeepers’ can assemble together with a range of other players involved with the craft of beekeeping, and attempt to negotiate and confirm what it means to be a ‘beekeeper’. Consequently, National Conference brings together, face-to-face in shared social space, various individuals and groups involved with beekeeping who for the remainder of the year tend to be geographically dispersed. It forces direct communication, rather than corresponding via

phone, fax, and electronic-mail. It is also a space in which heterogeneous actors are at once empowered and constrained because of diverse 'audiences'. Indeed, the high visibility of dissecting discourses - competing claims to knowledge - which are assembled and undone at Conference, is the key.

Chapter two unravels some of the events that unfolded at the 1998 National Conference staged at Waitangi in the Bay of Islands. It explores how different players avail of the national setting to pursue and impress a diversity of interests in beekeeping in the current free-trade environment. The chapter unveils opposing strategies on the part of groups of players, like the wasps and formal position holders, who go about enforcing their interests in different ways. It also shows how these disparate strategies intersect in and across the various meeting contexts composing National Conference, and produce revised understandings of the National Association. Conference is about individuals and groups contesting control over national strategies in beekeeping in both 'formal' meeting contexts and during 'informal' social gatherings.

National Conference is held alternatively at North and South Island venues because 'the Executive' believes this maximises members chances of being able to attend Conference - at least every second year. This practice also happens to reinforce actual and perceived differences between 'beekeepers' in the North and South Islands, intensifying competition. Locations are determined usually in the lead up to the present year's Conference, or in negotiations at Conference, by branch members who register an interest in hosting Conference. Hosting Conference is an increasingly precarious exercise for branch players due to changing and diverse interests on the part of a greater range of players. In 1998, National Conference was jointly hosted by the Far North and Northland Branches. Recent Conferences, like this one, extend over four days and accommodate a multiplicity of purposes. It used to be that Conferences were shorter and relatively 'formal' occasions.

Chapter three adopts a case study of the Canterbury Branch of the NBA where locally embedded players assemble in meetings to coordinate their

respective interests and needs in beekeeping. Monthly branch meetings represent an opportunity for members to get together and informally discuss their craft(s). At the same time, these meetings are somewhat structured: There are agenda items that have to be discussed, financial reports to be attended to, inward and outward correspondence that need to be verified, and so on. It is through these meetings that local players negotiate and rework shared understandings of how beekeeping gets practised in their region, and enact what they collectively regard as 'the regional branch'. Their concerted actions draw on *regional* knowledge to produce branch remits which project their interests and needs into the national forum in relation to the knowledge of other configurations of local players. Regional knowledge embodied in branch remits is appropriated by players, like wasps, for leveraging control in beekeeping and compelling formal position holders to serve particular interests.

Of the sixteen regional branches of the National Association, the Canterbury Branch is one of the largest and composes a relatively high proportion of *commercial* 'beekeepers'. The Branch encompasses members who together keep bees in areas extending from South Canterbury and the Canterbury Plains to Christchurch and North Canterbury. A central core of members, however, turn up to meetings and include commercial producers, honey packers, and two members who happen to be current Executive players. Other locally embedded players within the region may choose to engage in close-knit groups in addition to attending Canterbury Branch meetings. Such groups coexist interdependently of Branch relations and reflect local idiosyncrasies within branches. Local players who do not participate in these groups and/or in Canterbury Branch meetings are branded 'loose cannons' by other players. This is because these players enjoy 'weak' ties with players participating in official settings, affording them considerable autonomy.

Since 1997, electronic-mail distribution lists and a New Zealand beekeeping homepage on the world-wide-web have presented opportunities for players involved with beekeeping to communicate with others and to receive and impart information in ways not previously done. The computer

technologies coexist with 'official' means of information exchange via the National Association, and, at present, appear to be taken advantage of by specific individuals and groups. Chapter four contemplates the use of the distribution lists as a 'new' strategy for players possessing particular sets of skills and interests in beekeeping. There are presently two lists - the 'NZBkprs' list and the 'NBA' list - and in practice membership overlaps. Nevertheless, the distribution lists are used by certain participants in distinct ways.

Hobbyists and semi-commercial beekeepers, for example, exchange craft know-how and local knowledge that is tailored to relatively small-scale beekeeping operations. Public players also converse on-line in ways which allow direct and relatively informal interchange with grassroots players, reworking conventional relations between public and private actors. The active participation of these players on the distribution lists creates a sense of on-line community defined by relations of support and reciprocity. Wasps, on the other hand, are more likely to deploy the distribution lists, especially the 'NBA' list, as political tools. The lists represent for these players an 'unofficial' means by which they can seek to circumvent and expedite official channels of information exchange, and pronounce on the performance of formal roles by present role occupants. It is argued that the distribution lists further rhetorical strategies the wasps use to impress themselves as important players in beekeeping, and enable them to regroup with different players sharing similar interests.

The chapter also considers how conflict produced through players communicating via distribution lists has both positive and negative ramifications for players, including formal position holders. Conflict unveils game strategies of individuals and groups, sparks novel ideas and initiatives, and, consequently, prompts consideration of alternative courses of action. This implies departing from established, 'official' processes with a view to 'improving' them. It also helps reaffirm the purposes of having a National Association in beekeeping. The distribution lists render control more difficult for existing formal position holders, and muster and enforce accountability on their part. However, patterns of use by players differently positioned across beekeeping fora often present unintended or unforeseen consequences for list



activists. Active participants do not retain control over the use of information negotiated on-line by silent subscribers in 'real' settings. Moreover, formal players can selectively draw on or refer to the distribution lists in ways which distinguish the 'wasps' from players identified as "those who lift the lids of beehives". In this way, they can formally discredit the wasps in the eyes of 'the membership'.

In summary, the thesis unravels the New Zealand beekeeping 'industry' in terms of the strategies of participants presently composing it. The 'industry' is conceived as an assortment of individuals and groups who assemble across several settings to constitute the National Association and negotiate and act out multiple interests and evolving capacities. The players pursue strategies which simultaneously enable expression of their individual interests and needs, and allow them to form intimate and flexible relations with others sharing similar interests and needs. These others happen to be occupying equivalent positions to their own in the fields. Players' interests and needs constantly shift as they create, take advantage of, or react to opportunities presented by the competitive marketplace. Changing interests and needs outpace existing relations between players and their relative positions in the fields. It follows that in their struggles, the players constantly contest and reappraise the game(s) and the stakes on offer. They devise strategies provoked by tacit recognition and knowledge of each others' work, and mutual understandings previously worked out in the fields. In the course of reordering themselves, the players are redefining who or what are 'outsiders'. All this has implications for the National Beekeepers' Association, especially for formal position holders seeking to implement national strategies and wanting to impose national control.

## CHAPTER ONE

### CRAFT KNOWLEDGE: 'DOING THE BEES'

#### INTRODUCTION

“Those who lift the lids of beehives”, a favourite phrase of the President of the National Beekeepers’ Association at National Conference in 1998, encapsulates a rhetoric deployed by particular players to represent themselves in beekeeping. The phrase differentiates the strategies of ‘beekeepers’ as they order themselves and their work from the strategies of packers, marketers, hobbyists, and administrators enforcing their respective interests through the national organisation. For players who adhere to the rhetoric, it provides a filter and a lens through which they interpret and respond to the actions of others and regulate the entry of ‘newcomers’, like hobbyist beekeepers, into the Association. This chapter explores how the rhetoric of “those who lift the lids of beehives” takes form in *local* settings and is provoked through knowledge beekeepers develop and use in the fields working the bees. The chapter also explores ways in which the rhetoric is being challenged, reworked and reinforced through processes of ordering craft in relation to other players.

How players in beekeeping come to embody and perform the rhetoric is increasingly complex. In the context of free-trade, it is increasingly difficult to conceive of ‘beekeepers’ as a group sharing uniform interests and needs. While beekeepers have traditionally managed their hives within one locality or district, increasing numbers are preferring to keep bees over greater geographical distances to take advantage of differing nectar and pollen sources. This is an improvising strategy to keep their options open by hedging bets in the competitive marketplace. However, such practices erode *local* knowledge – beekeepers’ intimate understandings of the geographical area in which they keep bees – that is developed over time and is fundamental to beekeeping work (Kloppenburger, 1991). Local conditions, such as, land

topography, weather patterns, flowering flora, and mainstream farming practices shape what can be produced by beekeepers and the ways they go about maximising productivity from their hives. Shifting hives further afield means transcending and bridging forms of local knowledge; thus creating multiple interests and concerns. Beekeeping operations are, consequently, undergoing shifts in the numbers of hives being run, whether these are pollination and/or production hives, the extent to which marketing and exporting activities are undertaken, and the number of skilled and/or semi-skilled employees being recruited. These shifts reflect and create tensions experienced by beekeepers attempting to realign, and make better use of, their skills and capacities in a constantly changing market.

The use of the phrase “those who lift the lids of beehives” on the part of the National President at the 1998 National Conference is an attempt to align himself with players whom he sees composing ‘the membership’ of the national organisation. He wants to reproduce the existence of such a homogeneous ‘group’ in beekeeping. Players owning very few beehives, or possessing different sets of skills to those adhering to the rhetoric, are perceived as ‘newcomers’ by the National President. Many of these players are in fact previous producers of honey who have diversified into, and may specialise in, marketing and exporting a range of value-added products. While they may no longer physically “lift the lids of beehives”, having found ‘good’ employees to do this for them, they still largely identify as ‘beekeepers’. Hence, these players struggle to appropriate the rhetoric to reinforce their own sense of identity and places in beekeeping.

The meaning and significance of the phrase “those who lift the lids of beehives” was, for example, picked up by the administrator of the New Zealand Beekeeping homepage and electronic-mail distribution lists (see chapter four). For a time, the phrase appeared in the signature of messages received by all subscribers to the ‘NZBkprs’ distribution list in a symbolic gesture by the founder to win the support of the National President’s ‘allies’. The list administrator is one of the current National President’s main adversaries, and, not surprisingly, the National President shies away from these ‘new’ information technologies – at least in formal, ‘public’ fora.

Beekeeping practice is presently being reshaped by a multiplicity of discourses reflecting 'new' and divergent stakes on the part of increasingly heterogeneous players. This has consequences for how the work has traditionally been performed by honey producers in local settings. It also has implications for the ways in which the *national* organisation is being constituted, and these implications are investigated in subsequent chapters. Marketing and business discourses, for instance, are embedded in both *local* and *global* scales of action. Consequently, these discourses are emerging as dominant ordering strategies in beekeeping, especially in regional settings. This means regional boundaries are being reworked and reinvigorated, at the same time as *national* scales of action are undermined. In response, certain players are vigorously reconstructing the rhetoric of "those who lift the lids of beehives" in order to preserve *producer* knowledge.

The chapter contemplates the centrality of *local* knowledge in beekeeping, and shows how this knowledge gives rise to and shapes the rhetoric of "those who lift the lids of beehives". It employs a case study of beekeepers in Canterbury, particularly those keeping bees on the Canterbury plains. Reference is made to the Bay of Plenty region in order to draw some comparisons. A distinction is made between the *local* know-how and methods of beekeepers in specific areas where they keep bees (beekeeping *metis*), and craft knowledge applicable to beekeeping practice in general, called beekeeping *techné* (Scott, 1998). It is postulated, as part of the rhetoric, that 'beekeepers' are *bricoleurs* (Harper, 1987). They are craftspeople making do with bits and pieces - the odds and ends - of materials they collect and have on hand to intuitively sense, and respond to, situations as they arise (ibid., 74). This involves drawing on and adding to stocks of knowledge amassed over time with regard to particular local contexts. Being a *bricoleur* reinforces notions of self-sufficiency espoused by players adhering to the rhetoric of "those who lift the lids of beehives".

It will also be demonstrated in the chapter that beekeepers operate within constraints of interdependency and that these ties of interdependency are multiplying. The ways in which beekeeping gets done, for instance, are

increasingly entwined with farming practices in the localities where beekeepers keep their bees. Meeting pollination requirements of local farmers in Mid Canterbury are a case in point. This is inconsistent with the rhetoric of “those who lift the lids of beehives” because beekeepers adhering to the rhetoric represent themselves as individuals working ‘at one with nature’. Moreover, the actions of local beekeepers have always been coupled with each other and the activities of Apicultural Advisory Officers (AAOs) in relation to disease control practices. Local farmers and AAOs also depend on beekeepers to get their work done.

## “THOSE WHO LIFT THE LIDS OF BEEHIVES”

A key component of the rhetoric of “those who lift the lids of beehives” involves perceiving oneself and fellow ‘beekeepers’ as ‘rugged individualists’ and as ‘solitary workers’. Beekeepers purport to doing things on their own, operating in the bees’ slower world, and learning from their own ingenuity through trial and error. A national player believes this is a ‘mindset’ on the part of ‘beekeepers’:

They’re different. They’re very individualistic....I think its partly the mindset that has driven them down that path in the first place to a large extent, and also the amount of time they have working on their own - or travelling on their own – simply reinforces that. They’ve got the opportunity to think about the world and what a bunch of dreadful people the world is (Interview, August, 1998).

Keeping bees demands physical strength and mental toughness to handle the work and the time that is involved. It means observing the environment in a way that fosters a close and intimate relationship with nature, and all its diverse workings. Developing and utilising these sorts of skills nurtures self-reliant attitudes.

Beekeepers also see the craft of beekeeping as being one example of ‘man’s’ interference with nature that is relatively low impact. This is how they

distinguish themselves and characterise their work in relation to 'mainstream' farmers. They purport to having a holistic view of farming activities that brings them one stage closer to the environment. Being able to label farmers as 'outsiders' is a crucial component of how beekeepers represent and understand themselves as "those lifting the lids of beehives":

*Mid Canterbury beekeeper:* They [other farmers] only see the world in terms of what they are doing on their farm in the way of producing grass, producing crops or producing wool. They, they see the world more selectively....And generally speaking, farmers, although they say they are um environmentally aware, most of them are not....We see a side of farming that other farmers don't see; that is, the fragility of bees and the importance of them (Interview, March, 1999).

Beekeepers claim they are not making bees do something they were not designed to do, rather they view their role as simply facilitating a natural process. The following nevertheless reveals a duality in the ways beekeepers conceive their work, and embodies a tension between *hobbyist* and *commercial* enterprises in beekeeping:

*Mid Canterbury beekeeper:* I don't think beekeepers have ever *controlled* their bees. They work *with* them and they use the bee's particular qualities to achieve their own end, but they've never controlled bees. Beekeeping to this day has not learned to control swarming for example. That's something you'd want to do if you're going to control the bee....We haven't changed the way they [the bees] dance to...signal nectar sources, or we haven't changed the direction the queen lays her eggs in or anything like that. We're just taking basically the hive that had been built itself and adapted that to what we can work ourselves (Interview, March, 1999).

Beekeepers profess to having a fascination with the insects they keep which relates to the social order of bee colonies. A Mid Canterbury beekeeper suggests that, "the beauty of the bee is very attractive to people":

A lot of people have a couple [of hives] and they go and watch them and observe them and are fascinated....I guess for a lot of people that's a great chance – to be able to go into a society that's got 60000 or more individuals in

it, to go through that society without too much problem, and actually see how it's functioning....They all work together. They achieve exactly what they want to achieve. They do it with no fighting normally at all (Interview, March, 1999).

This fascination with learning from a 'perfect society', where inhabitants are seen to be working collectively towards shared goals, is paradoxical given the individualistic rhetoric of "those who lift the lids of beehives". Indeed, there is a further and related tension between beekeepers perceiving themselves as competitive individuals, and recognising themselves as a 'collective lot'. The following plays this out:

*Canterbury beekeeper:* Oh we're a strange lot. We're - um - different probably - yeah beekeepers are a different type of person from the average....And they have their own conception of themselves. They are very individualistic and - um / like beekeeping because I've always been an outdoors person and its one way / can earn a living outdoors (emphasis added).

*Researcher:* So it's something to do with the nature of beekeeping itself?

*Canterbury beekeeper:* Yes, definitely...very strong um - beekeepers can be very, very strong - within themselves...physically and mentally. Very independent and, yeah very independent (Interview, July, 1998).

*Life member:* We are unusual people otherwise we wouldn't take the punishment we take because at times you get punished, you know, and we all do it. If we weren't unusual we'd walk away from it (Interview, July 1998).

Most beekeepers start out as *hobbyists* and do not lose sight of their initial attraction to bees. For *commercial* beekeepers, however, the work has to provide not only 'psychological sustenance', but also material well-being (Harper, 1987:144). Like farmers, these players have a "direct stake in the results of close observation" of nature and are "immediate consumer[s] of [their] own conclusions" (Scott, 1998:324).

## LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

The challenge of 'good' beekeeping lies in interpreting nature's 'messages' and acting appropriately. To be able to do this beekeepers procure a mass of detailed knowledge over time which is peculiar to and embedded within (usually) one geographical area (Kloppenburger, 1991). Successful beekeepers exhibit sound knowledge of *local* conditions, and out in the fields this knowledge is embodied in a finite set of resources that are drawn on and re-assembled on the spot to make informed decisions. It is knowledge which equips beekeepers to perceive and interpret signs in order to take subsequent steps (Scott, 1998:328). Familiarity with the countryside, weather conditions, and farming cycles in the areas where bees are kept are intrinsic elements of local knowledge. Beekeepers purport to know all rural back roads off by heart, and where to find plentiful pockets of pollen and nectar bearing plants for their bees. They accumulate knowledge of the histories of apiary sites, places where they keep groups of beehives, in order to anticipate, for example, flowering flora, weather changes, feeding requirements of their bees, and colony behaviour.

Beekeepers are, therefore, deeply absorbed in the characteristics and peculiarities of the physical *places* where they keep bees. Being attuned to *local* conditions helps combat the uncertainties involved in doing beekeeping. It enables a wide 'repertoire of responses' to be developed over time in order to figure how the season is shaping up and to determine what to do with the bees to make the most of the season (Scott, 1998). Beekeeping work entails interpreting, re-evaluating, and anticipating naturally occurring phenomena as well as related human contingencies, and gauging the impact of these on bees. Beekeepers draw on 'experiential' knowledge previously accumulated in the fields to judge the relative condition of hives. They learn how to make sense of 'partly redundant signals' and to see sequences in natural and human events (Scott, 1998:312).

Following Scott, beekeepers are practitioners of *metis*. *Metis* is a form of knowledge encapsulating a "sixth sense that comes with long practice" (1998:328). It alludes to a perception of what is going on and what could



possibly happen that is developed over time and is specific to particular contexts:

Any experienced practitioner of a skill or craft will develop a large repertoire of moves, visual judgments, a sense of touch, or a discriminating gestalt for assessing the work as well as a range of accurate intuitions born of experience that defy being communicated apart from practice (Scott, 1998:329).

Scott suggests *metis* is “the mode of reasoning most appropriate to complex material and social tasks where the uncertainties are so daunting that we must trust our (experienced) intuition and feel our own way” (Scott, 1998:327). It is knowledge which enables beekeepers to act under conditions which are “broadly similar but never precisely identical” and which frequently demand “a quick and practiced adaptation that becomes almost second nature” (Scott, 1998:316). Accordingly, *metis* knowledge is “often so implicit and automatic that its bearer is at a loss to explain it” (Scott, 1998:329). A Mid Canterbury beekeeper provides an account of how he uses and develops his *local* knowledge:

Usually you notice how much clover's in the pastures, um things like that. Whether the thistles have germinated well....So just through knowledge, through going and digging in the paddock or just watching the paddocks that have been ploughed over or something like that. You soon see if its good soil or not. When you drive through a ploughed paddock you notice how high the water table is. If the water table is high, ah what type of soil it is, whether it is a clay sticky soil or a sandy Templeton type soil. You notice all of these things and half the time you don't realise you are noticing but you do (Interview, March, 1999).

*Metis* is knowledge which cultivates the sorts of skills associated with being a *bricoleur*. This is because the practice of *bricolage* involves ‘reflexive manipulation’ of available resources - both experiential knowledge and physical objects - to produce instantaneous responses to situations as they arise (Harper, 1987; Orr, 1996). The ability to do this is acquired through practice out in the fields with bees, through developing a ‘feel or knack for strategy’ (Orr, 1996:121-122; Scott, 1998:316). A *bricoleur* is someone who

creates novel solutions to variable problems by being “a thinker: considering, reconsidering, always with a view to *what is available*, what is at hand” (Harper, 1987:74):

Their intent is not to contribute to a wider body of knowledge but to solve the concrete problems they face. This does not mean that the practitioners of metis do not invent new solutions. They most decidedly do....What it does mean, however, is that the innovations of metis will typically represent a recombination...of existing elements (Scott, 1998:324).

Beekeeping work can be very rewarding when the ‘right’ decisions are made, and arguably becomes more rewarding over time. This is because a beekeeper’s “judgment in reading the environment [becomes] surer [and] their sense of what surprises might await them more accurate” (Scott, 1998:328). It also explains why beekeeping is embedded in localities and why beekeepers stay in the job long-term. However, the work can also be devastating, especially short-term. If the ‘right’ decisions are not made and nature defies predictions, or where there are unexpected human contingencies, beekeepers quickly learn the hard way. Thus, their sense of identity, as expressed and embodied through the rhetoric of “those who lift the lids of beehives”, is reproduced by ‘doing the bees’. Harper writes,

In his work the bricoleur defines and extends himself. It is not only that the work solves material problems, but also that one’s life chances take on the same characteristics as the decisions made in the course of work. It is in the replication of the means that the material work influences the mental (1987:75).

As association with age and knowledge in beekeeping exemplifies this. Life members of the NBA, who are ‘old timers’ in beekeeping, are valued for their accumulated wisdom and breadth of knowledge. Their knowledge has amassed over time and incorporates the practices of forebears. Consequently, these members play important roles, imparting craft knowledge often through verbal discourse to less experienced beekeepers in their areas and at NBA events. It follows that positions or social standing in beekeeping are generally determined by length of association with the craft, and that careers are

intimately tied to reputations for consistently producing quality honey in local environments regardless of seasonal conditions.

### **Beekeeping in Canterbury and the Bay Of Plenty**

In Canterbury *commercial* beekeepers keep at least 1100 hives. This means they may have 90 different apiary sites scattered around the countryside in a radius of up to 100 kilometres from their homes. The region is marked by relatively high numbers of commercial outfits, and high densities of hive holdings. Relatively large outfits are managed in order to make a living from producing predominantly clover honey; yet smaller apiaries of twelve to sixteen hives are operated to retain existing sites and to minimise interference with apiaries of other beekeepers. Beekeeping operations in the Bay of Plenty, on the other hand, are largely pollination outfits and producing honey may be a by-product of keeping bees.

Some Canterbury beekeepers keep their hives on four hive pallets because the terrain is relatively flat. In hilly parts of the region, individual hives on single pallets (called 'floors') may also be run. Large pallets are easily shifted using a hiab (or lifter) mounted onto beekeeping trucks, and streamline the management of apiaries. This allows Canterbury beekeepers to run large numbers of apiaries and to manage these by themselves. Pollination hives in the Bay of Plenty, by contrast, are usually perched on floors, enabling individual hives to be positioned amidst flowering trees and vines where beekeeping trucks cannot access. This minimises damage to the land inflicted by heavy beekeeping trucks loaded with hives. It also means that hives must be physically taken in and there is a method for lifting single hives that is well-practised by pollination beekeepers. The method involves two persons on either side of the hive placing their arms underneath the hive and lifting and moving simultaneously; thus, requiring *team work* and the employment of extra staff. Hence, local idiosyncrasies create different webs of interdependency and produce particular configurations of local players.

In Canterbury, beekeepers have claims to 'traditional' sites. This represents a strategy "to hold a piece of turf" by preventing other players 'robbing' sites if they happen to be temporarily vacated. The region is overstocked because keeping bees in Canterbury has traditionally been a popular and prosperous activity due to land topography and plentiful sources of clover affording an abundance of apiary sites. Labelling particular sites 'traditional' sites, therefore, began as a mechanism for staking one's claim to 'good' sites. However, changing farming practices are presently posing new problems as well as opportunities for Canterbury beekeepers: 'Traditional' sites are being lost, fuelling strategies of improvisation and innovation. For instance, some local beekeepers are using 'traditional' sites as seasonal sites depending on conditions of the season. This entails placing hives on sites only so long as nectar and pollen sources in the surrounding areas are yielding. A practice is also developing of leaving a solitary beehive on sites all year to prevent others taking over sites in case the season shapes up differently to that anticipated.

Asserting 'traditional' apiary sites is considered by players as a way of alleviating conflict where competition and beekeeper jealousies are ripe; although it may also be conducive to conflict. It is a means by which beekeepers keeping bees in common geographical areas seek to order themselves and their work. Beekeepers come to secure 'traditional' sites normally through inheritance from family members – informal *kinship* networks - or by way of verbal agreement with each other in contracts for sale and purchase of hives. It is common practice in Canterbury for hives to be sold along with their apiary sites, and, as apiaries are on land owned by third parties, this can only be achieved verbally. A Canterbury beekeeper describes 'traditional' sites:

(I)ts just that they've had the bees there for years. You see some sites of bees on the Canterbury plains have probably been there for 100 years now – probably not even shifted from where they were originally. They have just been good sites. They have been left alone. And the beekeepers [have] worked the hives and sold them to the next guy and he's kept the hives in the same place, and sold them to the next guy, and so it goes on (Interview, March, 1999).

An increase in mobility of hives within the Canterbury region and also across Canterbury 'boundaries' into adjacent regions, such as the West Coast, is attributed to changing conditions in Canterbury making it more difficult to earn a living from existing sites. In Canterbury, the 'best' farms for bees have often been those deemed 'unkempt' or 'rough' by 'successful' farmers. However, the growing practice of removing gorse hedges and other 'weeds' by farmers diminishes pollen and nectar sources available for bees. Nodding thistles are a further example. In Mid Canterbury, farmers delight in grubbing their paddocks of nodding thistles from which bees produce a distinct flavoured honey. This creates resentment amongst beekeepers and renders their work more difficult:

There are areas in Canterbury now where you couldn't, can't keep bees all year round because there's not sufficient shelter for them or pollen sources for them, or forage for them....Southland farmers can't clear out their stream beds or anything like that because...there would be flooding otherwise and that sort of thing. So there are always areas where there is food and forage for them in those places, but in Canterbury you can have a road and then a fence, then a worked paddock, and that scenario is repeated over and over (Interview, March, 1999).

Many Canterbury farmers are endeavouring to make their paddocks bigger, more productive, and streamlined for modern machinery. This is, consequently, detrimental to beekeepers and displaces their *local* knowledge.

In Mid Canterbury, a crop intensive area, local farmers are nevertheless becoming increasingly aware of the value of honey bees in assuring crop yields. This is related to a decline in the populations of native pollinators. Farmers are growing a wider range of crops as strategies to hedge their bets in the integrated marketplace, and are taking for granted that beekeepers will, and can, devote their hives to pollination work. For beekeepers, each crop presents different pollination requirements and endless factors that have to be considered, including the characteristics of the proposed site and the location of alternative foraging sources for the bees. Strong colonies - those with an abundance of nectar - are more likely to be selected for pollination work as

there is little opportunity for pollinating bees to gather nectar for their own needs. This places pressure on beekeepers to either upscale their operations, or to specialise in pollination or honey production. The extent to which beekeepers can manage their hives differently to perform both pollinating and honey production is influenced by *local* conditions.

Local farmers in Mid Canterbury are attempting to have more say over the placement of apiary sites in paddocks in order to achieve maximum efficiency in pollinating their crops. It is becoming a contest between farmers and local beekeepers over who has superior knowledge, especially in relation to bee behaviour. Beekeepers are complaining that farmer stipulations are incompatible with how they do beekeeping, and are at odds with how bees forage: The demands are seen to interfere with the ways beekeepers have traditionally ordered themselves, and the practices they have worked out over time as efficient and productive in managing their hives. At the same time, farmers are continuing to recruit spraying contractors to apply chemicals on or near the very crops that are being pollinated by bees. Mid Canterbury beekeepers are, consequently, incurring considerable hive losses and facing financial ruin due to incidences of spray poisoning. This increases their reluctance to take on pollination work.

A tension between honey producing and pollination has already been played out by beekeepers in the Bay of Plenty region. Keeping bees in this region was transformed during the 1970s and 1980s when extensive areas of land were cleared to make way for kiwifruit orchards, obliterating traditional sources of nectar and pollen for honey producing hives. Beekeepers took up opportunities presented by the new land uses in order to survive in beekeeping. They acquired different reputations in the eyes of orchard owners for delivering reliable and efficient pollination *services*. Moreover, their relations with AAOs were reworked as more beekeepers emigrated into the area creating greater hive densities and, consequently, increased incidences of disease.

Beekeepers in the Bay of Plenty region formed a 'pollination group' which later became known as the Bay of Plenty Kiwifruit Pollination

Association. The members wanted to co-ordinate pollination activities in the area and to develop their collective interests. AAOs became involved in forming quality standards for pollinating colonies, and shared benefits were perceived to accrue to pollination beekeepers out of establishing goodwill amongst orchard owners. Money gained from pollination is 'sure income' relative to producing honey; although the work is labour intensive and unremitting over the course of a number of weeks. Doing pollination involves relatively long hours, and timing is crucial. For instance, transporting hives to orchards invariably takes place late at night and in the early hours of the morning because the darkness ensures all worker bees have returned 'home' and are well-settled in the hives for the journey.

Pollination work fosters and reinforces ties with players previously deemed 'outsiders' by beekeepers. The work involves interacting with different sets of players and attempting to socialise them in the ways of bees. Indeed, the socialisation of local farmers, seed merchants, and spraying contractors may be a large part of the social work of performing pollination services (Orr, 1996:118). At the same time, beekeepers are accumulating technical knowledge of agri-chemicals being used by these parties as part of applying and extending their local knowledge of keeping bees in the area. This suggests that ties of interdependency between heterogeneous players embedded in *local* contexts are critical lynchpins for reconstituting *local* knowledge and beekeeping practice. Scott describes such a community as an "oral reference library for observations, practices, and experiments – a body of knowledge that an individual could never amass alone" (1998:324).

### Apiary sites

Beekeeping work tends to take place in a variety of places and *settings* within geographical regions. This is because commercial operators have apiary sites on land owned by several farmers in the general area where they live. Keeping bees in multifarious settings offsets risk and accounts for sudden or unpredicted weather changes that may result in hives in certain areas not producing surplus honey. A *North Canterbury* beekeeper explains,

(T)his is what we're always trying to do in our business - is *don't have all your eggs in one basket*. You *don't sell all your honey to one buyer*. You try and produce a number of totally different types of honey, and we are fortunate we in [North] Canterbury have that diversity. Where there are other areas like Otago who haven't, so you can bail in one type of honey but you have something else. Like honey dew and clover and manuka all come in at different periods. So you can have bad weather conditions over one period and that is wiped out or near enough to, but the others might come in. Or you can have a bad price for one, and pick it up on another....[B]asically the way we operate [is] east coast through to the west....Well, you can have lousy north-west conditions which will yield out nearer the coast, or you can have southerly and a lot of easterly and the foothills give you production (Interview, July, 1998).

The areas where bees are kept are often partitioned into different zones or districts that are attributed with having unique and identifiable weather conditions, soil types, and floral sources. This is a classification mechanism beekeepers deploy in their attempts to reduce uncertainties in their work by seeing order in natural things and events.

During a wet year on the Canterbury plains, for example, Mid Canterbury beekeepers expect bees on the 'light-land' to do well. This is coastal land east of State Highway One near Ashburton, embracing local districts, such as Dorie, Chertsey and Pendarvus. It is normally dry land, although it may be irrigated by local cropping farmers. A Mid Canterbury beekeeper describes how he recognises a wet year:

(T)he important thing in Canterbury is the December rain. If you get good wet Decembers and we get plenty of growth, you get good years usually. [Canterbury] is drier and flatter, and its usually more boom and bust. You know, if you get a good year in Canterbury it's a good year. If you get a dry year, you get a bad year. And being flat means that there's not a great deal of country, land that cannot be cultivated if [farmers] want to cultivate it. Unlike places like Southland where you've got creeks and willows and all those sorts of things [which] are much kinder to bees (Interview, March, 1999).



Hives near the Mid Canterbury foothills, or up in the high country stations, by contrast, are known to perform better in drier years because of relatively high average rainfalls. The Canterbury plains are also notorious for hot and dry north-west winds, and beekeepers become intimate with wind conditions and the impact of these on patches of land in their areas. They also learn of the ability of their bees to handle such conditions. In other words, the choice of apiary sites is crucial given changeable local conditions.

Moreover, there are all sorts of variables and unexpected contingencies that influence the season and the ability of bees to forage well. Beekeepers learn to anticipate these eventualities through previous knowledge of the places where they keep bees, as well as through observation, in order to manage their bees appropriately. According to an Ashburton beekeeper, this fosters an ability to see the countryside through the 'bees' eyes':

When I drive round working my hives of bees I'm looking for food sources for them and pollen sources, also shelter because bees need shelter....So when I see anything destructive in the environment which actually makes their life difficult, and that's occurring frequently in Canterbury now because guys are taking out their gorse hedges, they're clearing patches of 'rubbish' – blackberry and all sorts of things – to have more useable land on their farms. Then what they do is deplete the environment for the bee. And also with the use of chemical sprays, you've got a situation where the bees are very, very sensitive and they are finding it difficult to...their environment is becoming, well toxic to them basically. Toxic and difficult, so that's what I mean when I see the world through the eye of the bee. I see, I see changes which affect their survival – directly (Interview, March, 1999).

This illustrates the ways beekeepers' reputations are entwined with the fate of the insects they farm in the localities where they manage their hives. Indeed, beekeeping has been defined as the 'study of nature' by a life member of the NBA.

Beekeepers, consequently, have to take into account a variety of factors in determining 'good' apiary sites. Accessibility is a major factor. It is alright having to open and shut farm gates when one has an employee sitting in the

truck who can do this with relative ease. However, cropping farmers are sometimes perturbed by beekeepers' trucks entering their paddocks, and the placement of hives in paddocks must be satisfactory to both parties. Stock farmers are sometimes known to put stock in the same paddock as beehives without notifying the beekeeper concerned or erecting a fence around the hives. Cattle are notorious for knocking hives over and sheep often use the hives for shelter in hot conditions. Stock farmers who suddenly erect electrified fences around the hives, though, also render the beekeeper's task somewhat precarious.

Shelter is also an important consideration in Canterbury due to the notorious north-west winds. Bees flourish in warm, calm conditions, and tend not to venture from their hives in strong winds. Furthermore, they often get 'titchy' when beekeepers attempt to work with them in bad weather. Thus, hives are positioned on sites close to paddock corners where there are hedges affording wind shelter, or under trees for protection from the rain. It is even better when these hedges and trees are, for example, overgrown gorse and eucalyptus trees, because these can be foraged by the bees for pollen and nectar during the season. There must also be a shallow water source nearby that is easily accessed by the bees. Bees drown if they are submerged in water too deep.

The availability of pollen bearing plants is critical in determining apiary sites because bees require pollen for protein, minerals and vitamins. Pollen supplements may have to be fed depending on the season and the site. 'Good' sites invariably have plentiful sources of pollen:

*Mid Canterbury beekeeper:* If you find a place that's nicely sheltered, that's got plenty of pollen bearing plants about and a good supply of water on hand, usually that's a good bee site....And usually...in Canterbury on the better soil types because the depth of soil holds moisture for longer....You've got to remember the better soils do better in different years too. Dry years tend to favour heavy soil types; wet years favour light soil types....Gorse is one of the best [pollen bearing plants] in Canterbury because it flowers in the spring and autumn. But anything that flowers, such as dandelion or pussy willow or sycamore, kowhai....(Interview, March, 1999).

As bees produce honey from nectar-bearing sources, the placement of hives amidst flowering flora also has a bearing on the 'type' and quantity of honey beekeepers will ultimately collect. Anticipating the flight paths of the bees is a central component of this, and beekeepers have to acquire a feeling for direction and wind currents. It is like playing a game with the bees, and the bees are attributed with considerable intelligence. In order to improve their chances, beekeepers have to increase their local knowledge, as well as their understanding of bee foraging behaviour. They are constantly made aware of the constraints of nature, but see themselves learning from a 'perfect society'. Occasionally the bees will defy their calculations, and it is this sense of mystery and challenge that fascinates and enthrals beekeepers.

A typical day's work involves travelling to apiary sites. It depends on the state of the season what beekeepers decide needs to be done, and how many apiaries are able to be visited in a day. During winter, hives are 'wintered down' as bees hibernate in cooler conditions. This means they are given sufficient food – either honey or sugar syrup - to survive the winter. In the spring, hives must be prepared for the honey flow. This invariably means putting new queens in hives and building colonies to a strength that maximises their foraging ability. During the honey flow, in warmer conditions, regular trips are made to the hives to take off supers (wooden boxes composing the hives) laden with honey, and to replace these with 'dry' supers so the bees can continue storing honey in the hives. Beekeepers usually leave a minimal quantity of honey as feed for their bees. They will also check their hives for disease.

Feeding programmes are tailored to local conditions and vary according to how the season is shaping up. Beekeepers learn to gauge the present requirements of their bees, and how these requirements might change during the season. Thus, they acquire an intuitive feel for how their bees will survive in particular conditions. Indeed, their competence as 'beekeepers' depends on their capacity to forecast the type of season and to act appropriately. In these processes, individual bee colonies acquire personalities which only beekeepers

themselves are privy to. A commercial beekeeper describes the ways his bees earn reputations,

Just generally working the hives you do get a feel for bees. Some bees are excitable – they move on the frames quickly and things like that. Some bees gather more propolis than others. Some are better at pollen than others. There are all sort of individuals and, you know, it doesn't take long to assess what good bees are. I mean with good bees you want bees that are quiet. You want bees that stay on the frames nicely. Um, that...have good gathering, foraging capabilities....(T)he hives that are grumpy - aggressive hives - you usually know which those are. They let you know fairly quickly that they are there (Interview, March, 1999).

Queen bees arguably have a lot to do with the 'personality' of individual colonies; although beekeepers disagree on this point precisely because their immersion in local contexts produces disparate practices in queen breeding. The temperament, age, and egg laying capacity of queen bees may affect how easy or difficult hives are to work with, the ability of colonies to survive in less favourable conditions, and the capacities of worker bees to forage for pollen and nectar. There is normally one queen per hive and, as queen bees are often kept for more than one season, colonies establish reputations for being 'titchy' or 'quiet'. Some beekeepers will weed out 'titchy' bees through breeding programmes; whereas others are unperturbed by 'titchy' bees as long as they are 'good' foragers and/or pollinators.

### **Negotiating crafts: beekeepers and farmers**

It is during seasonal rounds to apiary sites that beekeepers intermittently meet up with the farmers on whose land they keep bees. The journey to apiary sites often entails driving through farm yards, and beekeepers look out for signs of activity in these yards. If they spot the farmer him/herself they will stop for a chat. These chats are an important way beekeepers go about projecting themselves as competent 'farmers' in the fields of others, and furthering their local knowledge. They exemplify how beekeepers go about ordering themselves in relation to farmers because there

is typically no contractual agreement between the parties. A Canterbury beekeeper explains how his *local* knowledge of doing the bees is all about knowing what farmers do on their farms:

I have found over the years, one of the best ways to talk to farmers is to just actually show them that you understand how they operate their farm. Now I know all about cattle production. I know about sheep. I know about crops. Um most of the time I can hold intelligent conversation with virtually any type of farmer because I know what's he doing and how he is doing it....It also helps in a relationship because um it breaks down that barrier of the farmer thinking that the beekeepers simply someone whose making a living from bees on this place and um...reaping benefits probably for nothing sort of stuff. You can show you can talk about difficulties in farming – their type of farming (Interview, March, 1999).

Topics of conversation between farmers and beekeepers during these on-farm encounters traverse the farming game: the weather, land conditions, stock prices, and cropping cycles. Forecasts are worked out concerning what the weather is going to do, how prices will or will not fluctuate, and which crops will do well this season. Beekeepers may also use these occasions to encourage farmers to take notice of events that impact on bees. For instance, they often expect farmers to alert them if hives are knocked over and to recount the damage in useful and meaningful terms which allow beekeepers to assess whether or not they need to make a trip over to the hives (Orr, 1996:83). This suggests farmers are being 'socialised' in the ways of bees.

Both farmers and beekeepers treat the on-farm encounters as opportunities to find out what each other is doing, as well as what other farmers are doing and how they are faring. For beekeepers, the farming practices of neighbouring farm owners are equally critical as bees do not adhere to farm boundaries and can fly up to five kilometres. In the odd case bees have been known to fly further. This means that it is not simply the reputations and *craft* of beekeepers being reworked in these encounters. The encounters are about mutually exchanging local knowledge essential to the work of both parties and other farmers in the area. As beekeepers go from

farm to farm, they are disseminating and 'cross fertilising' knowledge between various locally-embedded players.

## BEEKEEPERS AS 'BRICOLEURS'

Beekeepers, like technicians and repair persons, have a knack for inventing and modifying equipment out of materials present in their honey houses, trucks, and back yards. This has been promoted by their conceptions of themselves as isolated individuals, and serves to reinforce and perpetuate the rhetoric of independence and self-sufficiency. Items of machinery and equipment are likely to be scattered around beekeepers' yards in seeming chaos; although beekeepers will maintain there is always an 'order' and that each piece has a potential use even if that use is currently unknown. There may also be 44 gallon drums stacked up against a building and bee supers in piles awaiting repair and/or paint jobs. Carpentry, metal working, and mechanical skills deployed on the job are largely self-taught: These skills are worked out through processes of trial and error, and *observing* and *talking* about the work of fellow beekeepers.

Altering equipment is commonplace in beekeeping because problems and deficiencies frequently arise with the use of machines *in practice*. Machinery is standardised by manufacturers according to generalised beekeeping practices. However, beekeepers may still be using old supers and frames (devices constructed for holding honeycombs in bee boxes) which are of inconsistent proportions. They are also likely to have an array of different items of equipment. Depending on their local contexts, beekeepers disagree as to whether the age and condition of hive equipment, such as frames, affects honey production and quality, or impacts on the health of their bees. Thus, items of machinery are frequently modified or invented *on site* according to specific tasks on hand, the peculiarities of the equipment being used, and the particular physical and social environments where the machinery is being operated. In this way, the value and essence of 'bodywork' in beekeeping is created and reinforced.

Nowhere else is this do-it-yourself, make-do rhetoric more apparent than in the honey house itself, particularly the extracting area. This is where interrelated pieces of equipment take the honey from its capped form on the frame and pass it through various stages so that it can be run into 44 gallon drums for export in bulk form and/or for packing into retail pots. Machinery and pumps in the extracting room are frequently dismantled into their constituent parts by beekeepers and reassembled to improve efficiency, increase speed, or reduce noise. In addition, the position of equipment is often rearranged in an endeavour to make the workplace more user-friendly and ergonomic for employees. These efforts are not always successful; nor are they always strictly necessary. Beekeepers have an inclination to tinker which invariably proves overwhelming, and the plant may be temporarily shut down or the process delayed while this 'fixing' takes place.

During honey extraction, individual machines often acquire personalities: They are treated by beekeepers as 'individuals with histories and known propensities' through knowledge of past use (Orr, 1996:89). Most of the time beekeepers learn the limits of each machine and abide by these. On occasion, however, these limits are exceeded and catastrophe results. Amusing stories of extracting disasters are frequently told in local and regional settings. At branch honey promotions, for instance, beekeepers and their spouses delight in circulating such stories which usually involve spilt honey. There is always a moral in these stories: Wise listeners acquire knowledge of what not to do, and how not to act, in similar situations. Through these narratives, individual beekeepers also acquire reputations for inventiveness and ingenuity even though things may not go according to plan. This supplements the rhetoric of "those who lift the lids of beehives".

At branch field-days beekeepers scrutinise the various pieces of extracting equipment on display and discuss with each other how they work. Brand names are used to identify machines, and are also a mark of quality and performance. In addition, these practical displays typically involve a beekeeper's truck. A good truck is the foundation of an efficient beekeeping operation. As apiary sites in regions like Canterbury tend to be dispersed over great geographical distances, beekeeping is an intensive road user activity.

Shifting hives to take advantage of different flowering flora, or depositing hives in orchards and crops for pollination, reinforces this and entails hours of travelling on the road. Beekeeping trucks are quite distinctive as they usually harbour some sort of conspicuous lifting device. It is these lifting devices that are demonstrated 'at work', and which become topics for excited conversation between beekeepers who circle round. The players usually need to know something of how each other operates in order to make sense of their accounts of the lifter and its various strengths and disadvantages. These interchanges, thus, enable beekeepers to evaluate each others' performance and to compare local knowledge (Orr, 1996:69).

Telling stories and constructing narratives thereby become essential in constituting and developing craft knowledge. Like the photocopy machine technicians in Orr's account, stories exchanged by beekeepers in the course of finding solutions to problems "may be indistinguishable in and of themselves...from those told for purposes of boasting or idle amusement" (1996:2-3). For instance, at a Canterbury Branch meeting when members are allocating responsibilities for the Branch's forthcoming honey promotion, it becomes a contest or 'verbal duel' to see who can supply the 'best' frames for extracting during a live demonstration (Orr, 1996:76). The players tell of their work and renegotiate their reputations as 'beekeepers' because the quality of the frames they can offer speaks to their performance as *honey producers*. The amount and 'type' of honey contained on the frames conveys their success at producing quality honey over the preceding season. In Canterbury, darker honeys are traditionally considered of inferior quality and may be fed back to the bees as winter feed. Moreover, clover (white) honey is relatively easy to extract compared to darker honeys, like honey dew, which are stickier in texture. The 'type' of honey, therefore, has a direct bearing on the effectiveness of the public performance:

*Beekeeper 1:* They're big fat ones?

*Beekeeper 2:* They're reasonable. They're not comb honey standard. You don't get them like that at this time of the year.

*President:* Do you have more that we can call on if we run short?

*Beekeeper 2:* Ah well, then I'm not sure...



*Company:* Is that honeydew? There's heaps around!

*Beekeeper 2:* Yeah, but mine is wanted. Yeah well, I mean when we spoke about it last time they said 8-10 boxes and I put aside a dozen.

*Wasp 1:* We've got plenty of honeydew that's in flat comb.

*Beekeeper 2:* Well this isn't new comb, it is reasonable, but ah...

*Beekeeper 1:* I've got bush honey but its not as...

*Beekeeper 2:* Yeah well, I could probably get more.

...

*Beekeeper 1:* I've got plenty but its all dark....We've got a little bit of white combs, but they're not full...

*Company:* They'll be alright.

*Beekeeper 1:* ...they're sort of half drawn.

*Beekeeper 2:* Well there's, I mean quite a few of them are fully capped, but there's quite a few of them that are probably um  $\frac{3}{4}$  capped.

*Beekeeper 3:* It doesn't matter, as long as there are some cappings.

*Wasp 1:* You can show them [the audience] how they [the bees] fill the cells and that sort of thing.

*President:* We know what they're supposed to look like.

*Beekeeper 1:* I can sort out some...but you know  $\frac{1}{2}$  full,  $\frac{3}{4}$  full.

*Beekeeper 2:* As I say, I can get some more...

*Beekeeper 1:* We are still taking ours off.

*Beekeeper A:* Yeah, well so am I

(Branch meeting, 26/05/98)

Beekeepers tell stories in other ways too and this is a central component of the rhetoric of "those who lift the lids of beehives". They engage in dialogues at every opportunity to talk about their experiences lifting the lids of beehives and to discuss experimental 'projects' that they may be carrying out. It is presumed that all 'good' beekeepers will tell stories as this is a useful way of defining their craft and ordering themselves in relation to each other and different players in beekeeping. Thus, stories "are used to make claims of membership or seniority" in beekeeping, as well as to "amuse, instruct, and celebrate the tellers' identity" (Orr, 1996:126). Moreover, telling stories prompts reflexivity of the work performed in the fields 'doing the bees', and is a means of conveying experiential knowledge. Conversations between beekeepers are frequently cryptic because "elliptical stories provide all the essentials for those sufficiently versed in the [work]" (Orr, 1996:70,126).

It is argued that story-telling is also a “way of pushing facts around [and] trying others’ perspectives” to see if they have alternative ways of doing things (Orr, 1996:126). Stories present and embody challenges to other players to exchange ideas and to decode levels of competency in the craft of beekeeping. Particular practices may have been tried by other beekeepers and discounted. A life member advises that he always “tell(s) people how to do anything purely because it doesn’t need to remain a secret....there is no point in rediscovering the wheel all the time” (Interview, July, 1998). This player is constantly fielding calls from local players seeking advice and practical know-how in developing their craft skills. A Canterbury Branch member also alludes to the benefits of talking with fellow beekeepers:

Right from the start of beekeeping - I'm self taught, never worked for anyone else - and I've always liked listening to other beekeepers and then relating back to what I was doing. You can always glean little pieces of what someone else has been doing and add it to what you are doing to improve it....But you don't necessarily do what they are doing, but you can just fine tune things (Interview, July, 1998).

### Managing money

Working at ‘one with nature’ and learning from the bees means being oblivious to and, indeed, liberated from the routinised ‘modern’ world with ‘artificial’ prescriptions on time management. Beekeepers have a sense of time that is different as out in the fields they are attuned to ecological processes – weather patterns, the rhythm of the bees, and sequential cycles of germinating flora. A Canterbury beekeeper suggests to work with bees, “you move into a *slower world* in the sense that you have to work the bee at its pace. You can’t work the bee at your own pace” (Interview, March, 1999). This means that “time is thought of in terms of the activity of work rather than as a constraining context in which work must be placed” (Harper, 1987:136). Time is embedded in the work itself because the demands of bees and of nature shape the work schedules of beekeepers, rather than the other way round (Harper, 1987:136-7).

*Commercial* beekeepers are, nevertheless, accountable to the time requirements of others, such as packers and buyers, because they keep bees to make a living. The products they produce are also products of constraints and stipulations presented by the work of these others. Thus, beekeeping work is constantly being negotiated, juggled, managed and mismanaged by virtue of being alternated between the demands of different regimes of time management and criterions of performance. In Harper's words, "there is a time/money consciousness, but it is not the kind of accounting that characterizes typical production or *modern* repair work" (1987:144; emphasis added). A national player comments about how the global marketplace is impacting on beekeepers, and he uses a notion of time that contrasts with beekeepers' sense of time:

They forget that they are actually running now to make that money they walked to make ten years ago because the whole pace has picked up. It's a time factor, but the time factor is not going to get any better for them...(Interview, August, 1998; emphasis added).

Commercial beekeeping is a seasonal activity. Bees only produce honey during the warmer months, and how much or how little they produce that is surplus to their own requirements depends on the conditions and timing of the season. Income from the bees, therefore, usually accrues at certain points in the season – if at all. This means beekeepers have spasmodic relations with buyers of their produce who generally become responsive to the circumstances in which beekeepers operate. Uncertainties in beekeeping render relations contingent to market fluctuations and what happens to be produced in a season. It also means successful beekeepers learn how to stretch their income across the financial year, and to improvise with alternative sources of income.

Taking on supplementary sources of income where necessary involves beekeepers re-using previously developed skills and accumulated know-how doing the bees. Beekeepers rely on astute observation of the *local* environment to know how to act in the face of changing conditions and on-site eventualities, and this knowledge equips them to diversify relatively easily into other facets

of farming. Scott suggests that having a 'marginal economic status [is a] powerful impetus to careful observation and experimentation" of the local environment (1998:324). Financial uncertainty inhibits expenditure and perpetuates a 'make do' philosophy. This in turn preserves individual autonomy and encourages creativity, at least in the short to mid-term.

Budgeting is, therefore, very important in beekeeping. Beekeepers customarily rely on short-term loans and overdraft facilities from bank managers to maintain liquidity or working capital. 'Doing the books' is often the responsibility of beekeepers' spouses whose job is rendered problematic by beekeepers who have difficulty keeping to budget. Beekeepers know the craft of beekeeping is plagued with uncertainties and unexpected contingencies. This is the 'nature of the game'. It means that sometimes decisions have to be made requiring unforeseen expenditure of monies, and beekeepers are constantly alert to taking sudden and/or alternative courses of action. Moreover, their decisions are often spontaneous and they have to be stood by. While decisions and courses of action may transpire to be the 'wrong' ones, they are invariably the best beekeepers could do given their stocks of knowledge at the time and their materials on hand.

For this very reason, beekeepers have colourful relationships with their bank managers and other 'outsiders' who attempt to have a say over their work. It is not, for instance, straightforward gaining a loan because security is often beehives, rather than 'substantial' assets like land. The nature of beekeeping work, and the ways beekeepers embody and perform their work, are difficult for bank managers to understand. They typically find beekeepers troublesome to deal with, and it is vice versa. A North Canterbury beekeeper explains,

I don't see a computer having any contribution at all to a beekeeper....I get up early in the morning, I go out in the field, and then at the end my day to come back and put all that information in the computer, for what reason? You know, how is that going to contribute to honey production - I make my money from producing honey out there, not sitting down here. (*He stabs his finger into the table.*) And I've said that to the bank manager and to my accountant (*His*

*finger stabs the table again*) That where I make the money is not sitting behind his desk talking to him. It's out in the field. And a computer's exactly the same as a bank manager and an accountant. They are just an item that the least you have to do with the better. *(He indicates his dislike of bank managers with a facial expression)*. Because beekeeping is very seasonal, you don't have a steady income....and when these bank managers ring up we [have] to go down and see him and give him a forecast and this kind of thing - you know- what's going to happen. We would tell him over the phone there was **absolutely** no need for us to come down and muck round because it is a crystal ball totally. If you want to know anything you look at the past....[A]ll the information you want is in the history (Interview, July, 1998).

## FAMILY KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge of beekeeping and what it means to be a beekeeper is generally *family* knowledge. Many beekeepers are second, third and fourth generation beekeepers and have acquired their skills through participating in the family business as *employees*. They tend to take over the beekeeping outfits of family members and/or settle in the general area where they grew up and became accustomed to the craft. This is not surprising given the need to be intimate with *local* conditions, as well as the time it takes to build up this stock of knowledge. A North Island beekeeper points out that the craft of beekeeping and family history are 'tied-up with the land': People need to know the land which they are from in order to practice the craft and derive a sense of identity:

The knowledge is family, um you've got [name of a company] with three generations, and ours is three generations, and there will be a few others that are younger than ours that are three generations....You'll also get the variations. So [name of a North Island beekeeper] he's a second generation beekeeper. Now you get cases like [name of a packer], now [he] is as different from his father as what chalk is from cheese. And he is not a beekeeper. *He's had a University education....*I can't always see eye to eye with [name of packer] because [he] to me, he is a different temperament to what I am (Interview, July, 1998).

Beekeepers often encounter great difficulty finding 'good' employees to do beekeeping work. Employees may, for example, give up after a 'decent' dose of bee stings, or leave after years of on-the-job training to set up their own operations in competition. Beekeepers prefer to train people afresh, rather than taking on someone with limited experience. In this way, they can teach recruits their own ways of doing the bees tailored to local conditions and not be hindered by preconceptions of employees as to how the job should or could be done. A potential employee may be expected to demonstrate "a natural way with the bees" and to have a respect for them before being taken on and trained (Interview, August, 1998). A previous beekeeping employee observes that,

the only way you can get someone like that [a good employee] is by owning them because they are your son, or you hire them through the entire year...and keep them there. [Name of beekeeper] is finding it easier to hire someone to do marketing, than it is to hire someone to do beekeeping (Interview, August, 1998).

Many beekeepers are unable to afford full-time, all year round labour and often resort to employing people, like tertiary students, in semi-skilled or unskilled positions. They may, for instance, recruit employees for work in the honey extracting plants or during pollination whilst doing the actual beekeeping work themselves; at least until a son (or daughter) is old enough to physically handle the work.

A national player attributes the inclination of beekeepers to do the work themselves to a 'whole attitude' that "nobody can do it [beekeeping] better than me" (Interview, August, 1998).. This 'attitude' is fostered by the fact that beekeeping *metis* is intuitive knowledge acquired out in the fields with bees and developed over time. There is no substitute for dealing with surprises as they are encountered, and building up a wide repertoire of responses based on accumulated first-hand experience. This enlightens the urge of aspiring beekeepers to handle their own operations, and why beekeeping is done in families.

Consequently, the extent to which beekeepers take on board, and learn from, alternative discourses is influenced by a preoccupation with doing well what family members have done before. Certain players in beekeeping have criticised beekeepers for “reinventing the wheel” as family knowledge is seen to foster a ‘mindset’ and seeming inability to contemplate new ideas and different ways of doing things. For example, a national player observes that,

There’s a mindset that Grand-dad had and Dad had that is no longer applicable today. And because they are so busy doing what grand-dad did, trying to make a living, they don’t have time to look at it and say, jeez, we haven’t thought about doing it like that....(Interview, August, 1998).

Indeed, being socialised in the ways of bees by familial members is like serving a long apprenticeship to the craft and “may favor the conservation of skills rather than daring innovation” (Scott, 1998:319). However, *family* knowledge is extended by beekeepers in the fields working the bees: As *bricoleurs*, they are constantly recombining experiential know-how and materials accumulated over time in light of on-site eventualities and uncertain situations. In this way, they create innovative and practical solutions which add *incrementally* to their existing stocks of knowledge. Their responses are often instantaneous and this encourages creativity. It follows that beekeeping is like a “science of muddling through” (Lindblom, 1959, in Scott, 1998:327). Innovations are not always overt or immediately apparent to others.

## BEEKEEPING ‘TECHNE’

Beekeeping work, like other forms of practical labour, has a kinetic or intuitive quality (Harper, 1987). It is governed by hand and body knowledge because ‘doing the bees’ requires the body’s senses as well as the head to understand the ways of bees. Detecting abnormal colony behaviour or when a colony may be going to swarm, for example, are achieved through sight and hearing, as well through knowledge of past experiences. Knowing what to look and listen for is the key, and timing is crucial: Beekeepers determine

particular patterns of brood (egg laying) by the queen bee and are able to identify a peculiar humming pitch of the bees. Spotting disease in hives is also accomplished through sight and by smell, and is a skill developed simply by coming across incidents of disease out in the fields. Diseased hives omit subtle odours which experienced beekeepers' noses pick up immediately. The sunken appearance of cells, and the condition of larvae with their tongues sticking out, also signify disease. All these factors may take on peculiar dimensions given the local contexts in which bees are kept.

Moreover, technological developments in beekeeping tend to complement, rather than supersede, the hand and body knowledge integral to and developed by working with bees. Ascertaining honey varieties, for example, also entails hand and body knowledge. Whilst scientific analyses are available, these are more likely to be availed of by *packers*. Beekeepers are inclined to determine a honey's dominant nectar source through knowledge of bee foraging behaviour and the placement of their apiary sites, in addition to bodily senses, like taste and touch. For example, a Canterbury beekeeper describes how he goes about determining manuka honey:

Manuka is gel. It comes out like toothpaste...If you push - we test it in the comb - if you just push your finger straight on the capped honey, and your comb is sitting vertical, clover and honey dew just drop straight down the face of the comb. Manuka actually comes out like that (*demonstrating with his hands*) and then slowly drops down - because it's jelly like. Quite different to the touch. That's how we test it. When you bring it in from the field on your truck, occasionally you will get a site where they've had a honey dew flow and then they've suddenly gone onto manuka, and you've got to categorise it and get the honey dew out....And to actually physically taste manuka honey, you can only do five or six boxes then your taste buds are shot. You can't taste (Interview, July, 1998).

Beekeeping practice, therefore, interweaves 'old' and 'modern' forms of work. It is a craft increasingly characterised by "its melange of hand and theoretical knowledge" due to market pressures and the stipulations and openings posed by the work of others (Harper, 1987:20). Indeed, there is a tension between *hobbyist* and *commercial* beekeepers, and *commercial* beekeepers and honey



*packers*, precisely because their practices play out and overlay 'old' and 'modern' forms of work.

The uptake of technological 'advances' is influenced by the characteristics of geographical areas where beekeepers manage their hives, and by craft knowledge being passed down through *kinship* networks. Having the latest and most elaborate equipment does not always correlate with 'good' beekeeping practice. In fact, utilising technology may give rise to unintended consequences and negative contingencies. Successful beekeepers learn how to draw selectively on technology in accordance with their *local* conditions and 'real' needs (Kloppenburger, 1991). The use of mechanical lifting devices for moving hives in Mid Canterbury, for instance, renders the work relatively effortless, although may be inhibiting where hives are managed on individual pallets (or 'floors'). A North Canterbury beekeeper suggests it is "far quicker to *physically* load and unload [individual hives] than what it is with a machine" (Interview, July, 1998). Furthermore, computerised extracting equipment may maximise output in large-scale *commercial* extracting operations, yet detract from the enjoyment of the work in hobbyist enterprises where hand operated equipment is ample.

Beekeeping work ultimately involves learning at first hand to interpret weather conditions, how to handle bees in ways that reduce interference and minimise harm, and to anticipate bee behaviour and sense when something is wrong. It also entails knowing when, how, and why to make decisions that ensure not only the survival and well-being of the bees, but also to attain maximum productivity from them. As a form of practical labour, thus, beekeeping work,

... "is always controlled by full regard for the timely and local features on the environment within which it takes place....[It] involves the exercise of an intelligence that comes into its own in communication with the concrete and actual realities of its natural setting" (Bittner, 1983:253, cited in Harper, 1987:20).

Consequently, this aspect of the work largely “resists simplification into deductive principles which can successfully be transmitted by book learning” (Scott, 1998:316). Part of the rhetoric of “those who lift the lids of beehives” is a dislike for written instructions and a delight in being able to work out things without following documentation. Indeed, the challenge of beekeeping lies in recognising one’s mistakes and learning from them. A North Canterbury beekeeper reminisces on his past mistakes:

We’ve made some big mistakes over the years, and we have learnt from them...just silly little things like leaving queen excluders on and you get an extremely cold winter and you lose your queen and come round the spring you’ve got queen-less hives all over the place...(T)hat’s one that I can think of. There’s others that are probably a lot smaller than that, but you...hopefully learn from them and from other people’s mistakes too (Interview, July, 1998).

Beekeeping skills have traditionally been imparted by ‘father-like’ figures communicating and embodying their skill through *talk* and physical performance to ‘interested young fellows’. These figures speak to the “importance of the roles that are played...by the body and the eye, of the tacit knowledge acquired” in perfecting beekeeping craft (Law, 1994:81). Their bodies are “networks of gestures, actions and the rest, which reveal their skill, or their lack of skills...in part at least in the process of face-to-face interaction” (Law, 1994:183). In this way, beekeepers acquire *metis* knowledge through a long-winded process of initiation at the hands of older beekeepers, as well as of nature itself.

It is increasingly common, however, for ‘new’ entrants in beekeeping to have taken on a level of *formal* training through institutions like the Telford Rural Polytechnic. Formal institutions arguably impart craft knowledge to students in the form of *techne*. This is *technical* knowledge which is taken as ‘settled’ and having *universal* application (Scott, 1998:320); whereby embodying the condition of *modern* work. *Modern* work involves the application of some form of ‘objective’ training to an empirical task, and is marked by the separation of the theoretical from the empirical. Harper observes in relation to the repairman,

As automotive repair becomes rationalised, repairmen are trained in schools and certified by earning degrees....This training replaces knowledge gained in life, probably by one's father, as a method of informal certification....With the professionalization of repair, customers assume a repairman's competence on the basis of his formal certification (Harper, 1987:22).

Students of formal training are not equipped with *local* knowledge and the art of beekeeping *metis* because courses cannot be tailored to actual working conditions in distinct local areas. It follows that the training is not "guided by a live intelligence, fallibly attuned to actual circumstances; instead it is determined by a detached and externalized intelligence embodied in a formula" (Bittner, 1983:253, cited in Harper, 1987:20-21). While there might be 'hands on' training at Telford, courses are necessarily bounded and streamlined, representing components towards a degree qualification. Hence, they do not allow for the timeframe in which local knowledge and beekeeping *metis* are developed and perfected.

Research scientists involved in beekeeping may sometimes overlook the significance of *local* idiosyncrasies shaping the practical labour, as well as the capacities or needs of locally-embedded players to take up their research findings. Scientists may omit to incorporate *local* variability in research projects that they instigate and carry out because they are dismissing *craft* knowledge as primitive or 'unscientific' (Kloppenburg, 1991). At National Conference in 1998, for instance, a scientist from the Crown Research Institute, Horticultural Research, advises beekeepers that she wants to know whether they will be interested in 'taking up' and 'acting upon' "*good scientific proof of economic benefit in replacing frames more often than they currently did*". A survey had been administered to 35 beekeepers revealing a marked array of practices in keeping frames. She observes,

Some particularly *keen* people would only leave them for two years and then its into a new frame. And um rather *laid back individuals* in the survey had frames waiting for 36 years before they would be replaced. *That's more like what you hear people talking about* (National Conference, 22/07/98).

Variability in frame ages arguably reflects the ways beekeepers operate given their local surrounds. A range of factors contingent to local conditions will influence the durability of frames and how regularly they may need to be replaced. For example, the type and weight of honey commonly stored on the frames, extracting processes, transportation of hives, and rates of disease.

On the other hand, a second scientist from Horticultural Research downplays the contribution of scientific knowledge in beekeeping. He describes a related project investigating the effectiveness of methods being deployed by beekeepers to sterilise their wooden beekeeping equipment. The findings reveal many of the processes currently being deployed are in fact inadequate for achieving sterilisation; although the scientist simply makes *recommendations* to beekeepers as to how long and at what concentration they could be using particular chemicals. He also makes a joke out of posing these recommendations by suggesting beekeepers test a sample of their equipment first so as not to ruin all their equipment.

At a Canterbury Branch meeting after Conference, a group of Canterbury beekeepers happen to discuss their practises in keeping and sterilising hive equipment. Their discussions take place oblivious to the presentations given by the research scientists at Conference. A player has recently attended a Nelson Branch meeting and was “amazed at how things are done differently over there” (Branch meeting, 28/09/98). His experiences provoke reflexivity amongst Canterbury beekeepers concerning their own techniques. The dialogues reveal the operation of *family* knowledge behind many of the processes used, and pinpoint the centrality of regional variability producing disparate practices.

It follows that the roles of research scientists in beekeeping are generally limited to creating and disseminating knowledge in form of *techne*, once it has been discovered (Scott, 1998:320). This is knowledge which has limited practical application in the *local* contexts where beekeepers operate. Scott observes of *techne* that it,

...can be taught more or less completely as a formal discipline....[It is] characterized by impersonal, often quantitative precision and a concern with explanation and verification, whereas *metis* is concerned with personal skill, or "touch", and practical results (1998:320).

*Techne* standardises aspects of craft know-how and is knowledge "expressed precisely and comprehensively in the form of hard-and-fast rules" (Scott, 1998:319). This is unlike *metis* knowledge which is innovated in the fields with bees. It follows that successful beekeepers constantly build on knowledge in the form of *techne* because they act in contexts which are transient and shifting...[and] which do not lend themselves to precise measurement" (Detienne and Vernant, 1978:3-4, in Scott, 1998:320; Kloppenburg, 1991). Forms of written documentation are disadvantaged in this respect because "oral dialogue[s] [are] alive and responsive to the mutuality of the participants" as well as to their changing contexts (Scott, 1998:323). This enlightens the value of *talk* in beekeeping.

Moreover, beekeepers tend to have love/hate regards for Apicultural Advisory Officers involved with beekeeping. AAOs are often perceived as unable to address and solve *local* problems, both in terms of performing regulatory activities and through providing information and advice. This is despite AAO's exhibiting a 'feel' and 'sympathy' for beekeeping that appears to be out of proportion to the size of 'the industry' and their official mandates. It is common, for instance, for past and present AAOs to actually keep bees as a hobby. These 'public' players have previously worked in conjunction with beekeepers co-ordinating disease control practices, and attempting to fulfil developmental roles in beekeeping. They are now, however, fewer in number and their designated geographical areas of responsibility embrace different localities and cut across the regional branches.

A Canterbury beekeeper tells of 'MAF's' input in his area. His account juxtaposes the usefulness of these 'public' players in *local* settings, performing regulatory duties, with their usefulness in face-to-face situations at *National* Conference, where they can act as bridges of information:

They were absolutely of no use - apart from liaison between one beekeeper and another, but when it comes to um even to get them *out in the field*, and we had this blitz on this beekeeper up here. We actually had to scream down the phone and tell them to get up here and sort this problem out. Because we had 130 odd beehives we had to dispose of, and they were dilly, dallying around.... They were for gleaning of information from around the world and then disposing it - or distributing it through the Industry and things like that....[Name of a previous AAO] would be the last guy that was the nice guy in MAF. But he was useless *in the field*, you know...But at a Conference he went cross real well...He was a good bonding agent between members... he had good diplomacy and...good people skills! (Interview, July, 1998; emphasis added).

By contrast, a Waikato beekeeper traces the changing role of MAF officers in the context of free-trade. He interprets their present role as *taking* knowledge, rather than necessarily providing it. His account discloses variability in relations with MAF players on the part of differently embedded *local* players in beekeeping, yet also illuminates the role of these 'public' players as brokers furnishing information:

MAF used to be the man who came round and had a cup of tea with you and you discussed beekeeping with him, and then he went on to the fellow beekeeper and passed that information on to him free of charge. Now that role has changed very significantly...*they still come and ask us for information, but then they go and sell it to somebody else...*and that makes it a very much more difficult for us and for them. So they are not now in that role, and that's a role we are missing in the beekeeping industry, and we've got to fulfil that role of passing information on from the experienced beekeeper to the inexperienced beekeeper (Interview, August, 1998).

His account also pinpoints the value of *talking* about local conditions and exchanging craft practices. The current President of the NBA also recognises that "communication is what [beekeeping] is all about", although he alludes to different ways of demonstrating knowledge:

Very often the beekeepers are not trained in expressing themselves well, but have a great knowledge. And that is one of the pities of beekeeping -

sometimes we [the beekeepers] can be dominated by people who can express themselves well, but who know very little about beekeeping (Interview, August, 1998).

### National Pest Management Strategy for American Foulbrood

The National Pest Management Strategy for American Foulbrood (the 'PMS') embodies and expresses knowledge in the form of *techné*. As an instance of 'directive documentation', the Strategy codifies and rationalises disease control practices in keeping bees (Orr, 1996:107). It is a formal schema prescribing what beekeepers should do to eliminate the occurrence of disease in their operations according to set criteria, and abstracts beekeeping practice across regions. Technical aspects of disease control are translated into *national* and *scientific* terms by setting out in writing how beekeepers must attain 'Approved' status in order to legally inspect their hives for American Foulbrood. Beekeepers wishing to procure 'Approved' status are required to pass an examination in disease recognition and destruction. This 'proves' their competency in carrying out disease inspections of their own hives and the hives of those without 'status'. They are also obliged to enter into Disease Elimination Conformity Agreements with the NBA, which are codes of practice setting out their disease control plans. Where beekeepers do not acquire 'Approved' status they are obliged to furnish annual Certificates of Inspection to the NBA signed by Approved beekeepers who have inspected their hives. In some cases, the Strategy will also require beekeepers participating in training workshops to improve their skills in disease detection and destruction.

It is argued that the Pest Management Strategy is an attempt by particular players to impose a standardised process for disease control in beekeeping. This entails largely overlooking local idiosyncrasies and *regional* variability. Players responsible for the Strategy regard the elimination of American Foulbrood in managed beehives as a realistic goal, and they seek to attain this goal within a ten year period. They see the PMS as a market growth strategy for verifying disease control measures in negotiations with overseas buyers and ensuring quality control. However, a national player has critiqued

the PMS document for being written in what he calls ‘departmentalised’ language – language which ‘the public and beekeepers cannot understand’ (Interview, June, 1998). He sees the Strategy as an example of how beekeeping is becoming ‘bureaucratised’, and suggests the strength of beekeeping is the ‘freedom’ and ‘individualism’ it allows. While this player favours the Biosecurity Act 1993 in so far as it provides a framework in which beekeepers have freedom to act, he identifies the problem being its interpretation by players responsible for producing the PMS. Another player observes that beekeeping is characterised by the need for *individual* management, and this is how he differentiates the work from other primary activities.

As an ordering strategy, the PMS embodies a rhetoric deployed by players to enforce particular interests, just like the rhetoric being deployed by beekeepers to represent themselves and their work. Players behind the Strategy, including ‘public’ players and wasps, have attempted to codify what they see as ‘good’ beekeeping practice and to define and label who or what are ‘good’ beekeepers. However, it is troublesome labelling beekeepers ‘good’ or ‘bad’ as their disease control practices must be understood within the contexts in which they keep bees. A number of players have campaigned for *regional* implementation of the PMS, albeit from a cost saving perspective, because they recognise the value of regional players being able to tailor the PMS programme to *local* conditions. This would reduce uncertainty and ambiguity in how it is interpreted and applied *in practice*.

The PMS document is based on the claim that “one of the main obstacles to reducing the incidence of AFB even further in New Zealand is beekeepers who fail to carry out their required disease control responsibilities” (AFB PM Digest, 4). However, to the extent that the Strategy is unable to reflect local circumstances and furnish locally-embedded players sufficient autonomy, it may defeat the very purposes of players who put it in place, fuelling counter strategies on the part of beekeepers. Directive documentation is “severely limited in its prescriptive ability” because it affords multiple interpretations and uses on the part of players within their contexts of application (Orr, 1996:110). Allowing *local* players room to exercise



individual autonomy, however, may have both positive and negative consequences. Orr, referring to the work of photocopy machine technicians, observes that while directive documentation may enable “management...control over their employees, through control of the knowledge necessary to do the job”, in *practice*,

The technicians...use the documents in pursuit of their own goals, and these are only somewhat the same as those of the designers of the documentation. A technician's primary goal is to keep the customer happy, and this includes but is not limited to fixing the machine as necessary (1996:108).

Directive documentation, then, provides a systematic starting point for grassroots players to ‘frame’ their practises. In this way, the PMS may permit inconsistency in disease control practices, reflecting local conditions.

## CONCLUSION

The above discussion has revealed ways in which beekeepers embody and perform their work, and how they go about expressing themselves to themselves and others whom they encounter in local settings. For beekeepers, working with bees and producing honey and other by-products fulfils a sense of identity. They obtain pleasure out of managing healthy bees and observing the fruits of their endeavours. Their work is about being able to follow through on earlier actions and decisions to produce quality end products; although this conception is increasingly displaced. The chapter has also explored the centrality of *local* knowledge shaping craft practice, and enlightened reasons for regional differentiation in beekeeping. Regional variability poses ramifications for *national* strategies implemented by formal position holders, as well as for strategies of ‘outside’ players, like research scientists and AAO's, who attempt to fulfil developmental roles in beekeeping.

A rhetoric of self-sufficiency and individualism has been identified on the part of beekeepers. The rhetoric is an effect of local knowledge necessary to successfully keep bees and produce honey and bee products regardless of

seasonal conditions. Local knowledge demands a familiarity and closeness with specific local environments which can only be accumulated over time and developed through *practice* in the fields with bees. It is knowledge often exchanged via kinship networks and is added to incrementally through processes of resourcefulness and creativity on site. Being a *bricoleur* has been provoked by working with bees in isolated and 'unkempt' fields of others, and often through having marginal or fluctuating economic status. These conditions perpetuate beekeepers' notions of self-sufficiency. Evolving farm practices of local farmers in the areas where beekeepers keep their bees, however, are eroding established practices of beekeepers. 'Good' apiary sites are increasingly difficult to maintain and source.

Moreover, the uptake of free-trade philosophies on the part of certain players in beekeeping create different pressures for commercial beekeepers because their work shapes opportunities and constraints presenting to production work. Pressures include product specifications for specialist markets and the imposition of different regimes of time management. These processes are exemplified through tensions between, on one hand, craft knowledge imparted through talk and physical performance, and, on the other hand, scientific knowledge espoused by research scientists and AAOs. Thus, beekeeping is presently a peculiar blend of old and modern forms of work. Beekeepers are differently positioned to recognise and pursue openings presented by the competitive marketplace due to regional variability.

It is argued that the ways in which beekeepers represent themselves and their work to others are important: The current de-regulated environment embroils them increasingly in negotiations with others, demanding complexities with 'outside' players to ensure that innovative and value-added products reach the marketplace. Relations fostered or invigorated with these different players reflect limitations and openings presented by their work; as well as those arising from beekeeping work itself. Many players involved with beekeeping, like AAOs and packers, purport to have an affinity for and an understanding of production work. For instance, they may discern that not only do beekeepers delight in telling stories, these stories are fundamental for beekeepers to perfect craft know-how. In consequence, other players in

beekeeping tend to adopt narrative strategies to express themselves as ‘inside’ players with a stake in the craft.

Subsequent chapters relate ways in which the rhetoric of ‘beekeepers’ intersects with disparate ordering strategies of different players involved with beekeeping in and across a variety of fora. The ordering strategies of these other players are contingent upon the work they perform, and the networks they move in which overlap and transcend ‘official’ settings composing the National Beekeepers’ Association. The chapters explore how and under what circumstances other players are appropriating the rhetoric of “those who lift the lids of beehives” for their own purposes, such as for leveraging control over national scales of action. They also contemplate ways in which strategies of different players challenge, reshape, and reinforce the rhetoric. These players interact with beekeepers in pursuing their own specific interests and needs, and make sense of the strategies of beekeepers and other players in terms of their particular capacities in beekeeping.



*Plate 1:* An apiary site near Rakaia, north of Ashburton, revealing a line of Eucalyptus trees. The bricks are necessary to prevent hive lids being blown off during strong north-west winds.



*Plate 2:* Mid Canterbury Gorse: A view taken from a beekeeper's apiary site, near Mayfield, west of Ashburton.





*Plate 3:* An Ashburton beekeeper, tending a yard of bees, clears debris obstructing an entrance to a hive.



*Plate 4:* Feeding sugar syrup from a self constructed apparatus.

## CHAPTER TWO

# NATIONAL CONFERENCE

### INTRODUCTION

National Conference is a stage for different meetings, presentations and seminars which embody, assemble and recompose what is the National Beekeepers' Association. The events at Conference enable a range of players to represent themselves in beekeeping with multiple capacities, and to pursue their own specific interests and needs. The players have divergent understandings and interpretations of 'the organisation' by virtue of membership and participation in distinct and overlapping groups (Schwartzman, 1993:41). They act out formal and informal roles according to what they see as organisational rules and goals, and in relation to strategies deployed by other individuals and groups to secure control over national strategies in beekeeping. How these disparate groups come together at Conference, and the ways in which players engage in strategies in and across different meeting contexts are of interest in this chapter. The players are wanting to secure economic, social and political leverage in beekeeping, and this involves making sense of the actions of others in light of changing interests and needs; whereby reconstituting the National Association.

In other words, this chapter is about modes of ordering being staged by players with different notions of administering the craft of beekeeping (Law, 1994). The national setting assembles an array of interests, needs and capacities, and regroups sets of players together. Many of these interests, needs and capacities have been provoked into existence through the growing centrality of local and regional idiosyncrasies in producing, marketing and exporting niche products in the global marketplace. They also exemplify tensions between local, regional and national scales of operation in

beekeeping. By claiming membership of disparate groups, players are engaging in 'risk-sharing' or 'risk shedding' activities and these are embodied in disparate ordering strategies in the national setting (Stark, 1996). In Stark's words, the players are "recogniz[ing] the network properties of their interdependent assets and regroup[ing] them across formal organisational boundaries" (Stark, 1996:11). Put another way, National Conference is conceived as groups of players contesting 'official' ways of administering beekeeping, and vying for meaning and control of the National Association. By coexisting in the national setting, the groups both celebrate variability and attempt to assimilate difference.

This chapter is arranged into sections to illuminate the strategies of different players at the 1998 National Conference. Conference is about players struggling for control over national strategies in beekeeping in terms of how they have set themselves up to participate in these struggles in other settings, like regional branch meetings (see chapter three) and via electronic-mail distribution lists (see chapter four). The sections explore ways in which particular individuals and groups are expressing themselves and their work, and how their ordering attempts take form in different meeting contexts. The interests and needs of players constantly evolve, and this means that their strategies cut across and bridge different meeting contexts, at the same time as they are enabled and constrained by them. It will be argued in this chapter that individuals and groups pursue strategies in response to the actions of others which are contingent upon their relative positions in beekeeping. These positions are always at stake in struggles in the national setting. The players want to preserve or increase their positions vis-à-vis each other in order to maximise capacities to act on their interests and to fulfil their needs.

Examples are provided of particular meeting contexts, like the Annual General Meeting and a Special Meeting, where the different players assemble together and contest particular interests and needs. The Special Meeting, convened by Executive players on day four of National Conference, is intended to provide a forum for members to consider four resolutions proposing

graduated levy increases. This is in addition to two resolutions for implementing the National Pest Management Strategy (PMS); although the PMS resolutions are not considered in the Special Meeting because of what transpires in other meeting contexts. In relation to the levy resolutions, the players resolve to switch fora in order to better address their respective concerns. They are endeavouring to make sense of the apparent financial predicament of the National Association in ways which speak to their ordering strategies.

## RECENT NBA CONFERENCES

National Conference presently serves a multiplicity of purposes. This reflects an NBA membership that has become wider and more disparate. There are 'new' players attending Conference, such as hobbyists, who bring forth different sets of skills and agendas, as well as additional income for the Association. Under the new apiary levy system, 'hobbyist' beekeepers have been tagged 'commercial' operators and embraced by the 'formal' umbrella of the organisation. Hence, attendees expect more and hosting branches have to accommodate a range of interests and needs. This makes organising Conference far more difficult than had been the case in the past. The scale of networks is far greater, and 'formal' and 'informal' functions intertwine.

In the 1960s, for instance, National Conferences took place over two days, and comprised only the Annual General Meeting and Conference of Branch Delegates. The scale of networks was different as there were notably less players, and those who assembled every year tended to constitute a small group of individuals sharing relatively homogenous interests and concerns. Conferences would be relatively 'formal' occasions and little 'socialising' occurred. In the words of one player who attended these Conferences, there was "not the social time...it was all business and that's all there was to it" (Interview, July, 1998). If attendees arrived the night before, they would check in at the nearby hotel and briefly stop in at the local pub to say hello and good bye to fellow attendees who might happen to be there, and "the next day that



would be Conference...there was nothing beforehand" (Interview, July, 1998). Moreover, players were apparently not formally permitted to mingle with members of other branches, and separate tables were allocated to all branch members, rather than simply to branch delegates. This high degree of segmentation did not prevent verbal confrontations and the occasional physical brawl. It, nevertheless, illustrates how 'the Executive' regarded control as paramount and how they sought to maintain it.

In the past, tensions between local, regional and national scales of operation in beekeeping were different. Beekeepers, for example, used to produce mainly blended honey in bulk and distribute it to domestic honey packers; although producers in the North Island may have distributed small quantities of packed honey through direct sales from their own yards. National Conference has evolved as 'beekeepers' become much more than 'producers' in the traditional sense. The dilemmas they increasingly face in the contemporary marketplace are how to be competitive in a constantly changing and uncertain environment: whether or not to up-scale or down-scale their existing operations, to specialise in particular value-added products or by-products from the hive, to engage primarily in pollination work, or to become 'jacks of all trades'. Forming different and multivalent groups are attempts to resolve these dilemmas on the part of players bridging local actions with national processes. As a consequence, Executive members now conduct meetings behind closed doors during Conference. While these meetings coincide with the national forum, they are kept separate and 'private'; thus holding onto past remnants of Conference as primarily for 'the Executive'.

At the 1998 Conference, only branch delegates are physically segregated from other players as members of the various branches intermingle on the Conference floor. This separation persists despite a series of seating changes intended to make the delegates more clearly heard from members on the floor. There are always two rows of delegates' tables with the delegates in each row seated side by side; thus creating a sense of cohesion for the thirty or so branch delegates from the sixteen attending regional

branches. The positioning of the tables reinforces the *regional* structuring of the NBA, as well as the collective identities of each branch. It also renders branch delegates highly visible to other players. They occupy seating positions in between players on the floor and the podium area where the National President and Executive Secretary sit.

## REGIONS

The Annual General Meeting of the NBA forms part of National Conference and, in 1998, it commences with an opening address from the Mayor of the Far North, Sue James. Apparently, inviting a prominent person from the region where Conference is held is tradition. The Mayor immediately draws attention to the 'diverse' composition of her audience: She welcomes those who had come from afar in Maori and English, and asks for a show of hands to indicate how many in are her constituency. Her speech plays on, and is embedded in, region: The Mayor describes the geographical boundaries of the Far North area and the role of local government within the region. She refers to the heritage value of the land, and links this with bees, the 'beekeeping industry', and the national economy. She knows the region's capacity to produce 'lovely honey' and recognises its potential to produce honey with medicinal properties. As such, she labels the region the 'cradle of the North'.

By stressing the significance of *regional* resources for the production of particular honey varieties, the Mayor reasserts *local* processes of doing the bees, and links these with national and global processes through export opportunities. She has tuned into an important and strategic resource that players use to lever competitive advantages in the global marketplace. New Zealand beekeepers have international reputations for producing unique honey varieties, and these are derived from flora growing in particular localities and beekeeping regions in New Zealand. [The beekeeping regions equate to each of the sixteen regional branches, and, thus, encompass local idiosyncrasies.] The current trend towards differentiating honeys, then, has the effect of

consolidating local resources and strengthening local identities through competition for *regional* honey varieties. It also reinforces *regional* identities through making the branches more important, and this has implications for securing control over national strategies in beekeeping.

At the 1997 National Conference at the Rutherford Hotel in Nelson, guest speaker, the deputy Mayor of Nelson, also spoke about 'his' region and of what it had to offer. A striking black and white mural, positioned behind the President's table, served to reinforce the image of Nelson as an 'arty' place. It also continually reminded those present of where they were. A function of modern Conferences is, therefore, extending and overlapping the *local* knowledge of beekeepers in relation to different beekeeping regions. Each Conference is embedded within, and shaped by, the particular place - region - in which it is staged, and each year Conference is held at a different venue. This is increasingly important as a way in which 'regions' and 'locales' can be simultaneously reinforced, transcended, and tied into the 'national' structure. Moreover, the presence of overseas visitors at Conference, such as the American and Australian delegations in 1998, also ties local, regional and national scales of operation into global discourses.

## MEETING CONTEXTS

What is highly interesting and also problematic about recent NBA Conferences is the relationship between intersecting fora composing them. This is because meetings provide a forum for players to pursue their ordering strategies, at the same time as these strategies cut across and bridge different meeting contexts. Schwartzman observes that,

(t)he relationship of meetings to each other and to other types of communication events is...important....for understanding how meetings may either inhibit or facilitate the accomplishment of individual goals... (adapted from Schwartzman, 1989:67-69, cited in Schwartzman, 1993:65-66).

Players presently use the national forum to convene Annual General Meetings and discussion sessions for specialist beekeeping groups, and to deliver seminar presentations, reports, and research findings. As such, they are capitalising on a wider audience, often seeking innovative ideas and new members through networking and cross-fertilizing knowledge (Stark, 1996). The events at Conference form and rework interpersonal relations between individuals and groups, and are also the effect of them. Some of the events are designated separate days and 'bounded' timeframes at the 1998 Conference. Specialist association meetings and seminar presentations, for instance, are held on days one and two respectively. Days three and four are devoted to the Annual General Meeting of the NBA and the Conference of Branch Delegates. The Conference of Branch Delegates is the forum where the thirteen remits and four rule changes put forward by regional branches in 1998 are considered. [Discussions pertaining to the three Canterbury Branch remits presented at Conference appear in chapter three.]

The various meetings composing the national setting are a means through which different players "make sense of or 'see' the [national] organisation and their actions in it" (Schwartzman, 1993:41). Meetings also exemplify how players actually go about contesting and constructing the NBA itself. Players are able to gauge their sense of place in beekeeping vis-à-vis others, and attempt to negotiate "mutually-reinforcing interpretations of their own acts and the acts of others" (Smircich and Stubbart, 1985:727, cited in Weick, 1995:73). In other words, by engaging in narratives and common activities in and across the meeting contexts, players "shape and reshape the way [they] experience their organisation" and, hence, organisational reality (Schwartzman, 1993:44). The respective meetings provide players with "an interpretive context...for evaluating the significance and meaning of...event[s]" (Schwartzman, 1993:64), and also "encourage them to act in ways that have mutual relevance" (Weick, 1995:73).

However, while some issues may be contained within meeting contexts, contingencies frequently arise in practice which cut across the different meetings. This arises because players overlap the fora by possessing multiple

capacities and engaging in different modes of ordering as part of their improvising strategies to survive in beekeeping. Thus, processes marking the beginning and ending of different meetings are sometimes definitive and at other times volatile. For example, throughout Conference, the National President tries to schedule meal breaks to coincide with and signify the beginning or closure of particular fora; although he strategically intermingles certain presentations and committee reports between remit deliberations on days three and four in the context of the Conference of Branch Delegates. No matter how much preparation and forethought the President has undertaken to streamline and simplify Conference proceedings, and to coordinate events in an orderly way, he is obliged to accommodate endless eventualities and time overruns. On days three and four this requires spasmodically alternating fora, namely the Conference of Branch Delegates, the Annual General Meeting, and a Special Meeting.

What takes place in the national field illuminates how struggles between players engaging in processes of ordering are ongoing: always shifting, never clear cut, and never complete (Law, 1994:1). This is because processes of ordering frustrate and outpace the meeting contexts players use to define and regulate their relations. Schwartzman remarks that “situations, routines, and gatherings are themselves ‘practical accomplishments’....and whatever order is achieved is always precarious and tentative” (1993:39). Consequently, deviations and departures from the ‘NBA rules’ and prescribed courses of action are implicit in administering beekeeping. Certain players at Conference, nevertheless, assert ‘the rules’ and struggle to abide by written procedures in and across the different meeting contexts. These players experience difficulty accepting deviations from those rules and procedures by other players because this is how they go about seeing ‘the organisation’; that is, attributing order and continuity to their relations.

The idea of ordering as on-going is played out when a number of specialist association groups stage their annual meetings on day one of National Conference. The Comb Honey Producers’ Association, the Queen Bee Producers’ Association, the Exporters’ Association, and the Honey Packers’

Associations hold relatively structured meetings. This is due to group members largely adhering to formal and conventional ways of conducting their 'business' in meeting contexts. There are presented, for example, apologies, minutes of the last annual general meeting, matters arising from those minutes, the Chairman's annual report, financial statements, and items of general business. However, three out of four of the association meetings are actually about the legal dissolution of the association. The groups, with the exception of the Comb Honey Producers' Association, have apparently outlived the purposes and objectives for which they were established. Each began as an 'informal' and highly specialised forum for individual players to order specific aspects of their craft with the help of others sharing similar goals. The groups have since evolved in membership, and have developed written 'rules' and allotted *formal* positions. These processes have transformed them into generalised and bureaucratic-like entities. Hence, members have become discontented with the group 'structure': They see their capacities to keep pace with evolving interests, and their abilities to respond quickly to changing external environments, being impeded.

During the Queen Bee Producers' Association meeting, for instance, the rules and objectives of the Association are alluded to by a financial member, 'wasp', and current Chairman of the New Zealand Honey Exports JAG. He states there is nothing wrong with objectives, such as growth, communication, cooperation, stock improvement, profitability, and quality. These objectives have simply been lost sight of. This player considers it in the 'best interests' of players to treat 'the group' as a *discussion forum*, and/or to orient it to very small groups. Thus, he is evoking strategies in this context which allow for novel and spontaneous personal initiatives on the part of players, and which foster ingenuity and inventiveness in ordering their shared interests. The issue speaks to the relationship between 'formal' and 'informal' strategies, and recognises that 'informal' processes promote creativity of ideas and an inherent capacity to respond to changing situational factors.

## FORMAL ROLES AND INFORMAL PROCESSES

At Conference, especially for the Annual General Meeting, Conference of Branch Delegates, and Special Meeting, 'wasps' prefer to stick to what they see as NBA 'rules' and constantly compel adherence to 'official' procedures. This is in contrast to the strategies of players, such as the current National President, who tend to circumvent 'procedure' and rework 'the rules' where deemed necessary to advance proceedings. The players purport to be acting in the interests of 'the organisation' for "those lifting the lids of beehives", while seeking to do this in disparate ways. Their actions play out a tension between 'formal' and 'informal' processes, and this is particularly evident when branch remits are debated. 'Formal' processes are interpreted as actions which are planned, agreed on, or prescribed in the written 'rules'; whilst 'informal' processes stem out of "spontaneous and flexible ties among [players], guided by feelings and personal interests" (Dalton, 1959:218). Other players, like life members and branch delegates, fuse formal and informal processes because their ordering strategies involve drawing on both. These players are strategically positioned in the national field and across other settings to be able to do this.

Dalton conceives meetings as largely exemplifying "clashes between 'formalists' and 'informalists' over when and how far to depart from...formal role[s]" (1959:257). He exclaims,

On the one hand are the systematizers and routinizers to whom method and procedure are paramount. On the other hand are the adapters and reorganizers who stress ends over means. The first cling to the official as their *protection*. Cloaked in conformity, the second depart and *innovate* as they think wise – and can. The collaborative struggle of these two types is an *ongoing action* in which moral convictions are confirmed or outraged, and careers made or broken according to the skill and success of members in forming *elastic alliances* to protect themselves against unwanted change and aggression as they advance their respective views of policy, method, and personal interests (1959:7; emphasis added).

It follows that both formal and informal strategies are inherent in struggles in the national field, as players act in response to the actions of each other and in ways contingent upon their present positions in beekeeping. Thus, meetings can be understood as mechanisms connecting disparate modes of ordering on the part of individuals and groups participating in struggles (Law, 1994). By bridging the gap between façade and dogma on one hand, and unofficial and informal means on the other, meetings ideally enable the appearance of ongoing action. They also allow for the transformation of the national field through understandings previously accumulated and refined in the course of struggles (Dalton:1959:227). Branch delegates and life members assume crucial positions as brokers because they can play out discrepancies between formal and informal processes as tensions between control and innovation in ordering (Weick, 1995).

At Conference, the current National President illustrates that he desires “liberty to rearrange issues so that neither victory nor defeat, in the maneuvers of contending groups, can damage the organisation” (Dalton, 1957:237). In response, his main opponents, like the list administrator, pursue ‘formalist’ strategies and become preoccupied with doing things ‘by the book’. This often entails losing sight of organisational goals, whilst pursuing ‘the rules’. How players play out ‘informalist’ and ‘formalist’ roles in the national setting, though, depends on who or what group happens to be holding sway at the time, that is, occupying *formal* positions in the Association. Indeed, both wasps and existing formal position holders demonstrate at times both a willingness to ‘go by the book’ and to digress where circumstances warrant from their points of view. Even though ‘wasps’ appeal to procedure more often, they inevitably make use of interpersonal ties and mutual understandings based on trust in order to do this. The groups are competing for favour in the eyes of players identified as ‘the membership’ and, hence, a struggle ensues in the first place to proclaim ‘discourses of orthodoxy’ defining relations in the national field.

In their struggles for meaning and control in beekeeping, for instance, the players contest who and what group possesses the greatest *common*



sense. It is supposed by formal position holders, especially the National President, that the “preferences, practices, and interests” of ‘those lifting the lids of beehives’ equate to ‘common-sense’ and to ‘abstract rights’ in the organisation (Dalton, 1959:243-244). Indeed, what is ‘common sense’ and who or what is supposed to have it is highly problematic precisely because the issue encapsulates the discrepancy between formal and informal practices. Adhering to ‘the rules’ may inevitably infringe players’ sense of the national field and of the values they assign to having a national association. Their struggles for power accordingly embroil reinterpreting and reevaluating the ‘NBA rules’ in *practice* to reorder their relations in the field. Out of this emerges a greater understanding of ‘the organisation’ on the part of players, and, ultimately, improved ways of co-ordinating national strategies. This is because,

Creativity, development, and movement in any new direction can only be partially subject to rules, and are never bound by rigid formulas drawn from summaries of ideal conditions set up by those who crave everlasting order. With its larger blessings participative organization embraces some disorder (Dalton, 1959:264).

Hence, the ordering strategies of individuals and groups in the national field implicitly undo and rework ‘the Association’ as a complex effect of these intersecting modes of ordering. Ordering attempts embroil players in struggles to achieve relative durability in their relations, and whatever order is achieved is ephemeral (Law, 1994:109). It is argued that struggles in the national field on the part of players wanting to improve their species of capital vis-à-vis each other and lever control, are also about reconstituting the National Association itself.

## THE PLAYERS: ‘BEEKEEPERS’

Players, especially beekeepers adhering to the rhetoric of “those who lift the lids of beehives”, appear to use National Conference as an opportunity

to have a holiday. Some may arrive a few days early and/or linger a few days after to take in local scenery and attractions in addition to the debates that take place. 'Beekeepers' disinterested in the 'politics side of things', though, prefer to go out fishing, boating, tramping, or whatever other leisure activity is easily accessible, while the 'serious stuff' is thrashed out on the floor of Conference. Those who stick it out, find themselves caged indoors, overwhelmed by delicacies, with each other, and the mental and physical demands of a hectic time schedule. The Hotel where Conference is held is literally a 'hive of activity' for four days, and even the tempers of hotel staff are somewhat stretched. Yet, when players register on day one, behind the Hotel desk are the wife of the current Vice President and member of the Northland Branch and her daughter in law, wife of the current President of the Northland Branch. The presence of these two women impress Conference as a personal, family affair. For these women, Conference is interwoven with their everyday lives.

For beekeepers, the main attraction of National Conference is the opportunity to meet fellow 'beekeepers'. Morning and afternoon tea breaks, lunch hours, and nightly pub sessions, for instance, are eagerly awaited by all, but especially by beekeepers. These 'social' encounters facilitate the flow of information and the imparting of technological and practical know-how. Beekeepers thrive on talking about their craft and exchanging *local* knowledge, and other players may quickly become tired out by beekeepers who have the capacity to talk continuously. [By the last day of Conference, the mood changes considerably: from a jovial atmosphere to one of subdued resignation; although this may be due more to the 'politics' of the 'formal' settings pervading the 'gab' sessions, rather than the fact of engaging in them.] A favourite topic for discussion is geographical variability across the Islands and between beekeeping regions, which produce discrepancies in beekeeping *practice*. Beekeepers are concerned with how differences in, for example, land contour, land use, climate, and vegetation shape what can be produced, levels of honey production, pollination services, and outlets for disposing of produce. Weather conditions and regional variations are uppermost factors when livelihoods are at the mercy of the elements.

National Conference represents for beekeepers a relatively low-risk and non-business environment in which to quiz up other players in beekeeping, to exchange ideas and stories, renew acquaintances, and cement friendships. The program allows these players to pick and choose which 'episodes' of Conference to attend. They need not be burdened by the 'political goings-on' of the national field, or bothered with a 'Sponsors' Hour', if they choose not to be. Seminar presentations delivered by a range of players on day two of Conference tend to be thoroughly enjoyed by beekeepers. These seminars are regarded as highly informative and relevant to their own beekeeping operations, and are used selectively to add to their stocks of knowledge. In other words, the presentations enable beekeepers to reflect on practices being deployed out in the fields working the bees, and often become topics of conversation between them.

National Conference also embodies an expensive and indulgent setting in marked contrast to most beekeepers' lifestyles. It is a venue composing many different social worlds, freed from pressures associated with 'doing the bees', but bringing forth a different set of pressures. For some, Conference may facilitate the formation of 'business' contacts which transcend the national setting. However, relationships formed and renewed generally have spatial and temporal characteristics: They are embedded in specific times and scales and the constraints these impose. While some of these relations continue in other settings, Conference is seen as *the* opportunity to meet 'new' people and to catch up with 'old' acquaintances. Relationships are often meaningful only in this context which for many players is removed from the everyday life of beekeeping.

Hence, beekeepers tend to regard National Conference as a key social event as well as a place where organising gets done. As a group, they are less concerned with engaging in political strategies and may participate only as an 'audience' on the Conference floor. At the same time, however, beekeepers expect Executive players and branch delegates to be acting in their interests in this setting, especially during the Annual General Meeting and Conference

of Branch delegates. This means that they become much more than an 'audience' and are capable of being adjudicators of what takes place. They identify as 'the membership' and are identified as such by other players wanting to secure their trust and reproduce or restore their own positions in beekeeping. The assumption that the NBA is primarily a *producers'* association on the part of beekeepers functions as both a shield and a sword which can be strategically deployed by other players ordering beekeeping in and across the meeting contexts.

In other words, beekeepers who take an interest in proceedings at the Conference of Branch Delegates and the Annual General Meeting, invariably expect to see 'the organisation' at work and Executive players acting to fulfil their interests and needs. There is a presumption that 'rules' and procedures will be followed, and that this will occur in orderly and controlled ways. Democracy is envisaged as a 'perfect' system, alleviating conflict between participants and creating equality in decision-making processes. For beekeepers, "the *feeling* of order, clarity, and rationality" is important because it suggests that all is going well in the administration of beekeeping and the representation of their interests by national players (Weick, 1995:29). It allows them to conceive of 'the organisation' and to possess a sense of contentment with how 'it' is operating. Hence, a realisation that *practice* seldom matches *theory*, and that *formal* roles are never entirely synonymous with *informal* dispositions of players fulfilling them, is seldom conceived by 'beekeepers'.

## 'WASPS'

For players actively involved in packing, marketing and exporting 'value-added' products, and who may or may not be *producers*, National Conference fulfils different purposes. It provides legitimate and highly visible fora necessary for political (and economic) leverage in beekeeping. The national setting contrasts with the unofficial and 'informal' means of political expression taking place via electronic mail which some of these players also

use (see chapter four). To triumph on the floor of Conference is regarded as the ultimate achievement, especially by wasps who have to win the support of 'beekeepers' to promote their own views, further their own interests, and obtain new benefits. The wasps endeavour to present arguments in ways which appear 'objective' and 'neutral' to 'the membership' by appearing diplomatic and helpful. They try to clarify issues and procedures, and inform beekeepers of matters they may not know about. More efficient and strategic wasps at Conference, like the list administrator, employ these tactics frequently; whilst less effective wasps inadvertently disclose their game plans by becoming agitated and appearing single-minded. Weick advises that "those who get immobilized, defensive, and angry in organizations are those who see the world as a place filled with problems that can be solved once and for all" (Weick, 1995:187).

Wasps like to claim superior knowledge of procedures in the national setting, of what issues can and cannot be discussed in specific meeting contexts, and how to properly go about adhering to what they see as organisational rules. From the point of view of other players, especially beekeepers, wasps appear adept at immediately altering their behaviour according to the interpretive context 'governing' the situation, such as speaking rights. The wasps as a group engage in strategies to sustain due process in light of opportunistic and irregular actions they see on the part of other players, especially *formal* position holders (Law, 1994:79). Different players, like beekeepers, may be no less willing to follow procedure in the name of democracy, but often become confused and frustrated by 'official' rules prescribing how they should interact with fellow players in particular contexts.

It may be that wasps are vigorously clinging to formal processes as attempts to reclaim both their understanding of the National Association and their sense of place in beekeeping. This is at the same time as their strategies and actions are transforming 'the organisation'. In the present free-trade environment, wasps have experienced a discrepancy between their skills and competencies as marketers and their existing positions in beekeeping

(Mouzelis, 1994). Many have previously occupied formal positions in the Association. They tend to assume positions on national sub-committees of the NBA in order to maintain an ability to fulfil changing interests and, thereby, to act out multiple capacities demanded of them by situational factors. Consequently, 'wasps' are looking retrospectively at what they see as organisational rules and goals to account for their present predicaments and to envisage a future in beekeeping. Chapter three unravels some of these processes. The NBA provides a frame of reference for wasps to locate, define and orient themselves in beekeeping (Boltanski, 1982:19).

At the end of Conference, a South Island wasp commends the National President for his Chairmanship. The player's comments are interesting because they reveal how the wasp perceives himself as a player in beekeeping. The wasp considers himself as an 'outsider' in the *national* forum, and, by implication, as an 'insider' in regional settings. He states,

I would like to state thank you to the Chair for seeing us through this Conference. It hasn't been an easy tack. It never is actually an easy tack....I don't envy the task that is ahead of you, but I do say this, that we will continue to chisel away *at the outside* like we have been doing - I can assure you of that....I'm afraid that's the democratic process that we have (National Conference, 23/7/98).

He is upholding the validity of 'rules' and established procedures to enact and sustain democratic processes. Wasps discern discrepancies between the skills and competencies of current formal position holders, especially the current National President, and the requirements they see these roles imposing. When nominations for the positions of National President and Vice President are called in the Annual General Meeting, for instance, wasps dispute that newly elected Executive members cannot be nominated for President or Vice President in the national setting following their election to office, although prior to actually taking up that office. A potential wasp is about to be nominated, and both the National President and another wasp, as past President, purport to have conflicting legal interpretations of the 'NBA rules' on the matter. The President rules to disallow such nominations; thereby

reproducing his formal standing in 'the organisation' and also that of the current Vice President: Both players currently occupying the positions are subsequently re-elected.

### **The List Administrator**

In a seminar presentation on day two of National Conference, the administrator of the electronic-mail beekeeping distribution lists delivers an historical narrative of honey marketing. He is introduced by the Chair as a past President, Executive member, teacher, and webmaster of the New Zealand Beekeeping Homepage. [The Chair on this occasion is also an 'historian', and is the list administrator's successful opponent in the elections for the vacant North Island position on the Executive.] The introduction draws attention to how the list administrator is an enigma, having occupied both legitimate and 'illegitimate' positions in beekeeping. Moreover, the reasons for his intense interest in beekeeping are unclear for many players. He is distinguished as a 'hobbyist' beekeeper and beekeeping *employee*, and is seen to possess different sets of skills to those players 'lifting the lids of beehives' by virtue of his computer literacy. These categories, which players use to make sense of his place within beekeeping, do not account for his involvement ordering the craft.

Nonetheless, the list administrator identifies as an important player in beekeeping, and through his seminar presentation plays out his ambiguous status by playing his audience. He adopts subtle strategies in this context which reflect his targeted audience, and which contrast with his direct and confrontational tactics in response to the actions of National President in other settings. In these other settings, his actions make it look like the National President is doing something wrong, especially in the eyes of beekeepers. He intimates,

I have a real feeling for our organisation. I can remember my first interest at all in New Zealand Beekeeping history. I can place it for the moment, and it came

at the point when Francis Trewby, the only woman President of the NBA, passed over the President-ship over to me, and I realised the history, the involvement, the line of people who have been President of the NBA up until that point. And I suddenly thought - I'm one of them (National Conference, 21/7/98).

The list administrator proceeds to qualify what he is going to say by down-playing the significance of 'history' and what 'beekeepers' can learn from it:

I actually don't think you can learn a lot from the past. I enjoy it. I enjoy researching history, but given the situation in honey marketing, at least, and the situation is government services, and philosophy of delivery from the last, lets say 20 years, I 'm at a loss to actually describe where the Industry can go. I find it real comforting to stay with history because I can tell you what happened, but it takes a different person than me to actually lead you into the future well....*So don't expect me to have all the answers* (National Conference, 21/7/98).

In this way, he is disguising his agenda because 'history' is important here: It is the list administrator who is telling it and representing which groups or factions held sway. He has sussed out his audience and knows how to present material so that he captures their attention, but does not arouse their animosity. He avoids sounding authoritarian because he needs the respect of 'the membership' to be able to push significant points at the end and reclaim his sense of place in beekeeping.

The list administrator remains on 'safe ground' for most of his presentation by alluding to material most players will not have the knowledge to challenge him on. If he intrudes into more recent marketing events he knows members of the audience could challenge his interpretation of events; whereby, representing him as the controversial figure many players believe him to be. Put another way, players would recognise the presentation as an inherently subjective and incomplete representation of historical events from his point of view and particular positions in beekeeping. The list administrator informs 'his' audience,



I am going to finish at the demise of the HMA, and that's before quite a few people's time. So don't expect me to start talking even into the near past. I'm figuring 20 years is about as - at that point I've probably got half the room will come up and tell me I've got that last 30 minutes wrong. So I 'm going to stick mostly to the area that I actually like the most which was the 1920s and 1930s, and talk about the forces of honey marketing at that time (National Conference, 21/7/98).

In other words, the list administrator's seminar is highly effective because he understands his strategic position in beekeeping and embraces a 'sphinx-like character'. His presentation "can be interpreted coherently from multiple perspectives simultaneously" and this enables him to be make "moves in many games at once" (Padgett and Ansell, 1993:1263). This also means players can 'use' or interpret his representation in different ways according to their own interests and perspectives in beekeeping. For instance, players well-versed with marketing history, and those familiar with the list administrator's strategies, can draw selectively from his presentation for information and ideas. They can use these in conjunction with their own stocks of knowledge and to aid their own ordering strategies. It follows that the list administrator's representation can be deployed like *files*, "archives to be ransacked for answers to whatever questions any competent user might have in mind" (Becker:1986:131).

While the list administrator's presentation animates multiple identities on his part, it embodies only partial accounts of the 'reality' he is depicting (Boltanski:1982:8). He knows too well the interpretive context in which he is delivering his representation, and is empowered rather than constrained by this context. As such, he presents his account as a 'story', reusing material and making 'moral' assertions in seemingly neutral ways. Nevertheless, his choice of material to include and exclude, the order in which he composes this material, and the manner in which he presents it, enable his representation to be treated as an *argument* for an identifiable group of users, namely beekeepers. A representation in this form includes only material the maker deems necessary to get his point across and no more (Becker, 1986:130).

Indeed, it seems the list administrator's presentation is particularly enjoyed by beekeepers; although the 'knowledge and ability' needed by these players to make sense of his representation in ways in which he anticipates cannot be taken for granted (Becker, 1996:129). Makers of representations do not always retain control over the ways in which their representations are used. This point is also demonstrated with respect to postings on the electronic-mail distribution lists, which are analysed in chapter four.

In summary, the wasps as a group are trying to inject certainty and clarity in their relations with different players in and across the meeting contexts. They are wanting to subvert national strategies, at least until they can regain sway in the National Association. To this end, the wasps counter the actions of position holders whom they see pursuing 'informalist' strategies. The National President, by virtue of his formal position, is frequently obliged to initiate action. This means that the strategies of wasps often take the form of responses to the actions of the National President who demonstrates a tendency to depart from 'rules' and procedures. Wasps are also conscious of attaining a balance between belittling current position players and being 'democratic'; and between rigorously adhering to 'the rules' and unnecessarily prolonging proceedings. They want to win over 'the membership' in order to be re-elected into formal positions. To achieve this balance, they may improvise, like the list administrator, by appearing to play many games at once. This allows room for tactical manoeuvre.

## 'THE EXECUTIVE'

For national players on 'the Executive', National Conference may carry positive and negative ramifications: At the same time as the national setting represents a means through which they can reconstitute their formal and informal roles in beekeeping, it is also a mechanism for other players to secure accountability on their part. These position holders invariably want to retain their *formal* positions in the NBA, and, hence, to reproduce the state of the national field and the stakes being offered. By virtue of being *formal*

position holders, nonetheless, they have an interest in adhering to the meeting schedule, ensuring that the 'business' gets done, remits are voted upon, rule changes are considered, committee reports are heard, and so on. This is how they secure credibility as role occupants, and also reproduce the authenticity of formal roles.

The national setting enables 'the Executive' to determine what other players know of problems and issues presently affecting beekeeping and which implicate national strategies. They may wish to lever the support of 'the membership' for certain policies and practices they want to carry out or to avoid carrying out. In 1998, for example, 'the Executive' seek the necessary authority to put in place a levy increase in order to continue meeting increasing costs of their activities. Support for the levy increase is not actually forthcoming (see Special Meeting below). In other words, the national forum ideally represents for formal position holders a context for problem solving, rather than problem discovery; although, may give rise to unintended consequences. By staging Conference over four days, 'the Executive' can hold meetings 'behind closed doors' with the hope of monitoring eventualities if and when they arise.

### **The National President**

The National President's report at National Conference in 1998 is a comprehensive and, at times, contentious summation of current issues and problems facing players. The President looks apprehensive and sounds serious while delivering his report, but begins by recognising the contribution of two well respected players in beekeeping: The audience is informed of the recent death of a former MAF Apicultural Advisory Officer, who was also an active beekeeper and 'fellow member of the 1942 Club'. The President also directs the audience's attention to the retirement of one of the Executive members, who is a life member. This player has served on the Executive for 13 years and has only missed one Conference - in 1961 - in his 50 years of associating with beekeeping. The President is convinced he will "have a very

important role to play at this Conference" (National Conference, 22/7/98). He appears to be making this comment on the basis of how the retiring member has conducted himself at past Conferences, consistent with his position in beekeeping as a *life member* and *descendant* of a well-known family. It is apparent that the President holds great respect for his retiring colleague, and that he is able to stake a claim in beekeeping by identifying with two players of good reputation.

The President's speech reveals an intention on his part to act according to the interests of a particular group of players –beekeepers - whom he regards as dominant. He appears to be equating the needs of this group with the interests of 'the organisation'. However, justifying his actions by reference to a particular group does not guarantee that other groups will interpret the President's behaviour favourably or as morally sound from their points of view (Dalton, 1959:255). Law observes how "what counts as truth in one mode of ordering may count as evasion, or falsehood, or misunderstanding in another" (1994:165). Indeed, the National President, as an Executive player, has conflicting allegiances to different groups, namely 'the Executive' and 'beekeepers', and he needs to resolve these through meshing 'contradictory as well as complementary informal roles' (Dalton, 1959:255). This means being innovative in how he performs his formal role, and often reconciling discrepancies through "introducing new and advantageous meanings into issues" (Dalton, 1959:244,255).

It is interesting, though, that the National President feels inclined to state dogmatically what he wants in his report: He demonstrates a readiness to depart from 'the rules', where to follow 'the rules' would in his eyes hinder the 'enjoyment' and 'profitability' of beekeeping. He knows there are those present, notably the list administrator, who will unremittingly challenge and undermine him at every opportunity. These players typically have divergent ideas for and stakes in increasing the 'enjoyment' and 'profitability' of beekeeping. Where the President is seen to depart from 'formal' and 'official' ways of handling proceedings, the wasps will quickly act to enforce adherence to 'the rules'. Dalton compares what he calls 'strong' and 'weak' managers,

The strong...tolerate dilemmas, and even make a game out of them....They flee neither necessary conflict nor the responsibility for charting new routes. They quickly turn ambiguous situations to their needs....Where the weak look for protection in the letter of rules, the strong find essential meanings in formal precepts by their free and unanswerable interpretations. They know when to avoid decisions, and they are able to mark time and wait for developments with minor frustration. More able to anticipate and interpret developments, they are more likely to have the reserve which enables them to meet the situation....[Whereas] the weak are prone to lose sight of goals in concentrating on procedures (Dalton, 1959:247-8).

It is not that wasps are weak, but that the National President has the advantage of being able to instigate courses of action to which they are compelled to respond.

By stating what he wants, the President may anticipate that his opponents will rise to the occasion and do the exact opposite. This is what happens. Perhaps he is hoping the wasps' actions will lower them in the opinion of beekeepers and characterise them as 'weak' players. Nevertheless, the President and beekeepers would have benefited had he kept quiet because, on this occasion, he renders both his position and stance-point transparent. As National President he occupies a simultaneously commanding and vulnerable position. He is obliged to make (ultimate) decisions, and his decisions will always come under scrutiny. They may turn out to be the 'right' ones, or they may come back to haunt him. It follows that being President is a two-edged sword. Dalton aptly sums up the President's plight by referring to it as 'the paradox of coerced freedom':

This is the freedom to choose alternative courses of action, to create new means, official or not, for winning ends, and to devise ways of appearing to conform when practice forbids it. The course and outcome of interplay between official and unofficial are usually uncertain. This itself is a condition of freedom....And he is further tortured by the responsibility, as a formal decision-maker, for transforming it into certainty, and by fear of failure and rejection (Dalton, 1959:243).

In other words, the National President is a highly visible and easy target. This explains why he endeavours, wherever possible, to turn things back to 'the membership'. Through careful maneuvering he can cause other players to make the decisions; thereby absolving himself from responsibility. For example, he intermittently calls on life members (and to a lesser extent past-Presidents) present at Conference to adjudicate on the application of the 'rules' in practice and to advise of 'appropriate' ways of doing things. The National President appears to draw on the 'expertise' of these players whenever the going gets tough, and this is strategic because it relegates accountability to third parties.

In his Annual Report, the President makes only brief reference to the poor beekeeping season and to falling world honey prices. He, nevertheless, pronounces on the future of beekeeping in New Zealand:

I am very optimistic about the future of beekeeping. It will probably not revolve around the production of honey, but more around other products of the beehive and pollination (National Conference, 22/7/98).

There is a tension here: He has already aligned himself with 'those lifting the lids of beehives', as honey *producers*, and has rejected those he labels 'newcomers' - players either owning very few hives or having a distinct set of skills from "those who lift the lids of beehives". Yet, the President accepts the growing importance of other facets of 'beekeeping', such as, doing pollination work and deriving by-products from keeping bees like pollen and propolis. He appears to embrace these only as aspects of producing, and is, thus, reasserting the boundary between *producers* and production on one hand, and *marketers* and distribution on the other. For beekeepers, though, this is problematic in practice. The National President, simply by virtue of the sheer size of his own beekeeping operation, may be unable to appreciate these difficulties.

It follows that the current National President may have a problem securing the trust of beekeepers because he operates such a large beekeeping enterprise. The sheer size and market dominance of his company renders his actions in beekeeping highly visible to other players, even though these players are pursuing strategies to preserve their own positions. For the current President, wearing the 'beekeeping hat' means being "part of trying to set the correct environment for beekeepers to operate to their maximum efficiency" (Interview, August, 1998). He is very much aware of juggling multiple capacities, and has commented that,

...this is an area I have a certain problem in because I am actually involved in beekeeping, but I'm also very used to wearing different hats because as a family I wear one hat, as a director of Rotorua division I wear the hat of Rotorua division, as a director of a company, Arataki, I wear that hat, and as a Waikato delegate in the past years, I've had to wear the Waikato hat....(S)ome people do not realise that when I'm President of the NBA I am representing the beekeeping hat (Interview, August, 1998).

Indeed, he is sometimes scolded for bringing 'informal', personal interests to his 'formal' role as National President. These allegations typically originate from wasps who have previously occupied the role and have performed it differently. In chapter three, the strategies of wasps in Canterbury Branch meetings are discussed. In these contexts, the wasps struggle to impress on fellow branch members the significance of ties of friendship between the National President and the current Executive Secretary which they see frustrating the performance of both roles. The wasps' stories also allude to the current President's strategies in allowing himself room to juggle his different capacities, For example, one wasp remarks that,

...[the current President's] a great one at coming back all the time and saying, well that's not my interpretation of it. We said 'may', not 'can'. You know, he makes those sorts of distinctions (Canterbury Branch meeting, 26/05/98).

The following example, from a North Canterbury beekeeper, conveys that grassroots players recognise that those occupying formal positions in the

Association, like the role of National President, have different skills to perform their role(s):

When [the current President] came in, he came in with fresh ideas and everything....He is a very dominant sort of a person.... I don't have any problem with him personally. It is just the way he is and, you know, I've accepted that's the way he is, but um we all have our strange ways about us (Interview, July, 1998).

Role occupants themselves come to realise that formal roles seldom coincide perfectly with the informal dispositions of those fulfilling them. They learn that their informal skills and capacities are necessary aids in performing the roles (Dalton, 1959:259). Having different skills and capacities arguably fosters an "attitude vis-à-vis the rules of the game...[which is] much more reflexive" (Mouzelis, 1994:168). This allows for ingenuity and inventiveness in performing formal roles and devising national strategies.

Allegations against position holders are, therefore, inherent processes of ordering, and are handled better or worse by players composing any organisation. Those fulfilling formal roles are prone to subversive strategies of other players, especially where those others aspire to performing the role(s) themselves. For example, a wasp happens to brand the current Executive Secretary as a 'biased outsider'. In his eyes, the Executive Secretary has "been willing to closely ally himself with particular people" and, he suggests, "no Executive Secretary has ever done that before" (Interview, August, 1998). Dalton observes that,

...[a] formal role sensitizes [it's occupant] to what appearances he must maintain, what masks he must wear, and what justifications he must have on hand to preserve *core consistency* of the role as it changes. But his awareness of this becomes self-defeating when his sensitivity jells to the point where he fails to fit his role to its neighbours and allows his defenses to become cries of blatant vested interest. To avoid this he must expand his official role to embrace a variety of informal ones (1959:257-258).



Consequently, the actions of role occupants are vulnerable to misinterpretation by other players. This is especially so where players tend to see roles and responsibilities which can be perfectly performed, or have vested interests in denouncing the current performance of those roles.

The meeting of the Pollination Association on day one of the 1998 National Conference illustrates the strategies of the National President in a meeting context other than the 'formal' sessions of the Conference of Branch Delegates and the Annual General Meeting. The President organises this meeting informally, and this is in stark contrast to the meetings of other specialist Association meetings. He happens to be the group's long-standing Chair, and the Secretary of many years is his wife. Those present participate somewhat like in a classroom setting because the Chair draws out his 'class' and extracts information from them. The object of meeting face-to-face like this seems to be a strategy on his part for generating fresh ideas and better ways of doing pollination work. He assumes a role as facilitator, prompting discussion by asking questions and then naming people. Often the 'victims' are those he knows have the answers, but not always so. Thus, the Chair is deploying ordering strategies in this setting which utilise his social and professional networking skills. The meeting is an example of how "some groups are prone to mak[ing] informal communication an end in itself", and contrasts with bureaucratic-like groups where 'discretion' is replaced with 'certainty' (Dalton, 1959:224).

Some players might find the Chair's role suspicious and intimidating in this meeting given that he too is a recipient of information: He absorbs a lot and appears to offer little in return. It is a common story among players, especially adversaries, that the current National President uses his *formal* position, in conjunction with the market dominance of his company, to dictate how things get done. He is seen to 'weed' himself onto committees and Associations like this in order to be in positions to control them, and further his own personal and financial interests. Players can observe from his conduct at the Pollination Association meeting that he is an effective game player. His manner of chairing enables him to exercise and retain high degrees of control.

He is adept, for instance, at causing others to play out predictable lines of action without disclosing his own game plan. This is accomplished under pretences that the information being disclosed is valuable to 'the group'. Members who are fluent with his ordering tactics get the most out of this meeting.

It is argued that National Conference may be regarded as problematic by national players, like the President. Conference composes a number of different social worlds in which these players can engage with different sets of players in struggles to reproduce particular interests, as well as their own formal and informal positions in beekeeping. Conference also provides contexts in which they carry out their formal roles and monitor the performance of others. In order to do this, Executive members establish ties of trust and reciprocity with each other, at the same time as trying to conserve their trustworthiness in the eyes of 'the membership'. This often requires them to answer allegations and accommodate the interests of 'wasps'. Moreover, their strategies are intended to minimise the likelihood of unintended consequences for 'the Executive' as a group arising out of the strategies of others.

#### BRANCH DELEGATES:

Branch delegates also wear different hats by virtue of acting out multiple capacities in and across the various fora. They are beekeepers, wasps, sub-committee members, past and present position holders, specialist association members, and so on. As such, their *formal* and *informal* positions in the national setting empower them to play many games simultaneously. This is highly advantageous to their own causes, and also to 'the organisation', especially during the Conference of Branch Delegates. These players epitomise 'the organisation' and their actions are seen to carry out the obligations it imposes on members. Delegates can successfully project the views of fellow branch members, embodied in votes cast in remit meetings, into the national setting. In this way, they communicate and enforce *regional*

idiosyncrasies and interests, whereby conserving or increasing the autonomy of their regional branch. Delegates can also deploy their positions as *regional* representatives to negotiate and interweave personal and local interests with collective and national interests. Consequently, the purposes of Conference for these players are varied.

Branch delegates are positioned to cause other players, like formal position holders, to play out certain lines of action which may be predicted or condoned by beekeepers. By virtue of participating in cross-cutting networks, through membership to different groups in the national field, delegates can also bring in new ideas and novel interpretations of branch remits, initiate and realise alternative ways of doing things, and facilitate and remedy information flows. They are equally positioned to do the opposite; that is, to curtail new ideas and initiatives and to forestall information flows. Stark warns that “to be accountable according to many different principles becomes a means to be accountable to none” (1996:25). However, branch delegates are ultimately answerable to fellow players in regional and local settings as they may be called to account for their actions in these contexts. Moreover, delegates are nominated by regional players in the first place on the basis of their trustworthiness and reputation. Potential candidates are likely to be selected according to the “*capacity [of other players] to predict and affect their behavior*” (Granovetter, 1982:1374; emphasis in original).

In other words, branch delegates are strategically placed to counter the actions of both wasps and formal position holders in the national setting. They can bridge the disparate strategies of these other players in terms of overlapping capacities. Like life members below, branch delegates occupy positions as brokers between groups of players, and in this way can provide solutions in ambiguous and uncertain situations. Their actions may incite action on the part of others and bring about decisive outcomes in meeting contexts, like the Special Meeting (see below). The mandates these players are assigned to carry out in the national setting, unlike other formal positions, enable them to readily introduce informal processes in the performance of their roles. This means they have the capacity to “sanctify...[neither] formal

or informal approaches to the exclusion of the other” and that their actions reflect “the fact that *the very rules and principles being fought over are products of compromise* (Dalton, 1959:245, emphasis added).

## LIFE MEMBERS:

Being a life member at National Conference means projecting and imparting experiential knowledge of beekeeping practice to other players during ‘informal’ or social sessions, as well as exhibiting knowledge of ordering processes amassed over time in ‘formal’ proceedings. Advantages in being a life member accrue in pleasure derived from being formally licensed to impart practical know-how to interested ‘young’ players. There are also benefits in the sense of fulfillment that arises in knowing years of hard labour out in the fields of others working the bees have produced a set of skills other players are striving to attain. This realisation is achieved vis-à-vis the range of players in the national setting. Moreover, a feeling of familiarity with what transpires at Conference, means life members can purport to discern patterns and recurring themes in how beekeeping gets organised across time and, therefore, to act as bearers of ritual knowledge.

Life members frequently act as intermediaries or aids in power struggles between wasps and formal position holders at Conference. They can function as both assets and liabilities because they claim overlapping membership to both groups. The current Vice President happens to be a life member, and he considers the current National President cannot ‘touch him’ because of this ‘status’ (Interview, July, 1998). He accordingly purports to counteract the National President whenever he feels this is necessary. While the President may not always heed the Vice President's advice, he always listens to it. This illustrates that *life* members may actually be held in higher regard than ‘formal’ position holders. The key lies in the continuity these members provide. Whilst National Presidents come and go, life members are literally there for life. Moreover, the Vice President suggests the President can ‘get’ the wasps simply because they are not *life* members, and vice versa.

When the wasps held sway over national strategies in beekeeping, the Vice President recalls having informed the then National President that he would carry out certain lines of action in order to avoid a particular player having a 'shot of you'. He advised,

If I do it he can't shoot me. He can't shoot at me – he daren't – because I'm a life member (Interview, July, 1998).

Indeed, the positions of life members in beekeeping fuse informal and formal ordering strategies deployed by other players. Life members meet a need for "various go-betweens and intercessors both officially and unofficially, to reestablish workable arrangements" in openly political conflicts (Dalton, 1959:232-3). They are "loyal and crafty agents...[who can be] used...as a link between formal and informal action" (ibid.). Put another way, life members possess *political* knowledge, that is, knowledge acquired retrospectively in terms of gaining a sense of the National Association across time, and accumulated through previous struggles in the national field (Weick, 1979 cited in Schwartzman, 1993:37). This is in addition to their tremendous *craft* knowledge. It follows that life members are endowed with 'institutional memories' through past experiences in the national setting and participation in local, regional and national scales of action (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:139). This means they exude a 'loyalty' towards 'the organisation', and can "engender...lines of action adapted to the situation", which are both an effect of their tacit knowledge (or *habitus*) predisposing them to act (ibid.).

Other players draw on life members to convey "things that no one else wants to assume responsibility for knowing, doing, or being associated with", and to pronounce on 'correct' ways of conducting proceedings at Conference (Dalton, 1959:233). For example, upon hearing the 1998 nominations for life members from branch delegates at the Annual General Meeting, the National President requests current life members present to stand before the house. It becomes apparent that the life members are all 'old timers' - men aged at least in their 60s, and this reinforces an association with age and knowledge in beekeeping. The President comments, 'if I can see you all I can take your

advice through, off you.’ The current National President is not a life member and perhaps he feels he never will be. He may not enjoy the prerequisite respect of beekeepers to accomplish this status, especially if the wasps can re-gain sway. By seeking to use the knowledge of life members, though, the President is hoping to derive formal and informal benefits. Life members have access to “resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to [them] by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:119).

In other words, life members occupy dominant positions in beekeeping, and this status is projected into the national forum where it is reproduced through their own strategies and the strategies of others making use of their ‘expertise’. Life members are perceived by players to always put the interests of beekeepers, that is, the enjoyment and profitability of ‘lifting the lids of beehives’, ahead of their own personal and business interests. They are also likely to harbour conceptions of themselves as doing so. The current Vice President is ‘immensely proud’ of his life membership and describes it as ‘the highest industry award’ (Interview, July, 1998). His life member certificate is framed and mounted on his office wall. He observes that there are ‘not too many of them around’ and recounts how he came to be awarded with one:

I'd been through the queen production era - I brought a queen producing business from Frank Wright...who had been producing queens for 30 years. He approached me...and taught me how to raise queens....So I have told a lot of people about queen production (Interview, July, 1998).

Indeed, he is approached several times during Conference by ‘beekeepers’ seeking insight into raising queen bees.

For life members, then, the ability to share knowledge of beekeeping practice and rituals with other players at National Conference cements a sense of identity and place in beekeeping. These players have almost bird’s eye vision of administering beekeeping, and do not become knotted with present struggles and ordering strategies of players. Consequently, they

possess a capacity to look beyond present dilemmas and to respond to the actions of individuals and groups in ways which advance the long-term interests of 'the membership' and enhance the profitability of keeping bees generally. The performance of two life members at Conference, who are also Executive players, illuminates how these players draw on their knowledge and reputation to reshape the strategies of other players. In the lead up to the Special Meeting (see below), these players take advantage of their mix of informal and formal roles in beekeeping.

### **'PUBLIC' PLAYERS**

Research scientists from the Crown Research Institute, Horticultural and Food Research, and Apicultural Advisory Officers from MAF Quality Management, now AgriQuality New Zealand, like to attend a range of sessions at National Conference. They appear to particularly enjoy the 'political goings-on', in addition to the range of social functions which allow direct interchange with grassroots players. Their length of stay at Conference reflects their level of engagement with the craft of beekeeping, and the extent to which they identify with players "lifting the lids of beehives". The presence of these 'public' players in 'the audience' often acts as a mechanism compelling other players to engage in impression management strategies and to put on dissimulating performances. 'Public' players can either hinder or advance the ordering strategies of individuals and groups, and may be used to muster or erode accountability for national strategies. Players may feel obliged to put on 'good shows' and to forestall signs of conflict, especially if they regard the 'public' players as 'outsiders' in beekeeping. However, there may be advantages for players bringing attention to sources of discontent where this might elicit information or advice from 'public' players present who move in different networks.

It follows that research scientists and Apicultural Advisory Officers function as both assets and liabilities in the national setting. These players can also deploy National Conference as an asset in their own work; although

the strategies of other players in the national field may produce negative and unexpected contingencies for them. For example, 'public' players often present reports and presentations during the Annual General Meeting and/or on day two of Conference in order to impress their interests and ideas to local, regional and national players present. They do not necessarily retain control over how their interests and ideas are interpreted, and the ways in which their representations are put to use. Their presence at Conference reshapes the cooperative links they have with different players in beekeeping to carry out their work, in ways which are both enabling and constraining.

### **Apicultural Advisory Officers (AAOs)**

The National President invites the two AAO's present at National Conference in 1998 to deliver their reports ahead of other reports, such as national sub-committees and research scientists. The President likes to take the more 'contentious' reports first, and delays the presentation of innocuous ones to intersperse these with heated deliberations on branch remits during the Conference of Branch Delegates. The AAOs appear to use their reports in the national forum to provide face-to-face communication with grassroots players and, thereby, to promote links with these players. They also want to muster legitimacy for their involvement in beekeeping in the presence of a cross-section of players. The tasks of these 'public' players in beekeeping have previously included coordinating disease control strategies for beekeepers and fulfilling advisory functions. Chapter one briefly alludes to different attitudes of beekeepers towards regulatory and advisory capacities of AAOs in local and national settings.

This year, the MAF officers appear apprehensive. The senior of the two, for instance, reminisces on his previous involvement with beekeeping and this has the effect of personalising his presentation. It is probable he knows what has been going down regarding a counter proposal on the part of the NBA to administer the Pest Management Strategy. He intimates:



This area [Northland] is a matter of great significance to me...because I was born up here....It was also at this very Conference and this very venue in 1982 that [the previous] Chief Advisor for Apiculture at the time *hung up his hive tool and handed it over to me*. So he gave his final report to Conference and I gave my first. I just wonder if this could be my last report to your Conference as well (National Conference, 22/7/98).

The AAO's reference to 'his hive tool' reveals a sense of intimacy with the *craft* of beekeeping, and plays on the image of the veiled person 'lifting the lids of beehives'. It shows an awareness of what 'beekeepers' do and a willingness to get involved with the practical work. A hive tool is an essential item beekeepers rig themselves with to work the bees. It is typically a piece of steel with a hook on one end to lever frames out of supers, and a sharper edge at the other end to separate boxes stuck together.

The solemnity of the MAF officer's mood may also stem from a sense of dispossession or displacement with the impending division of MAF Quality Management into the proposed State Owned Enterprises. He is the only full-time Apicultural Advisory Officer remaining in a group of seven staff within MAF working in beekeeping. His colleagues are all multi-skilled. He distinguishes himself on this basis and identifies as an 'inside' player in beekeeping. This is both advantageous and disadvantageous. His position is precarious because he is less able to improvise using multiple sets of skills relative to his colleagues; yet it is also a strength in being able to retain or exercise control over his 'less experienced' colleagues with respect to beekeeping. Hence, it is like a twin edged sword that discredits him professionally at the same time as it accredits him socially (Boltanski, 1982:14).

More importantly, the long-time MAF player perceives the reordering of his organisation as beyond his control; reworking how he can fulfil, or how he sees himself fulfilling, his role in beekeeping. In other words, situational factors, such as changing economic conditions in the de-regulated environment, are effecting a lack of congruence between this player's dispositions, that is, his capabilities and aspirations in beekeeping, and

normative expectations arising out of his *formal* position in MAF (Mouzelis, 1994:163). This fosters an 'inauthentic' identity on his part, that is akin to the sense of displacement being experienced by 'wasps' who have previously occupied *formal* positions in the NBA (ibid.). The AAO is using his report to articulate these concerns to players in beekeeping and to secure their understanding of his current predicament. He is, thus, seeking validation or reinforcement of his role in beekeeping, and this is at odds with the strategies of players, like the current National President, who desire less 'MAF' involvement in beekeeping.

### Research Scientists

Research Scientists also attend National Conference and deliver presentations of their research activities. These players use the national setting to represent themselves as players with a stake in beekeeping, and to arrange their work in relation to other players present, especially 'beekeepers'. Chapter one contemplated the know-how these players can hope to furnish to 'beekeepers' operating in *local* environments under specific conditions. The work and interests of different players in beekeeping constrain and enable what the Research Scientists can do, and how they purport to go about doing it. The first speaker from Horticultural Research begins by positioning herself as a member of a 'bee group' within the Crown Institute. There are 'five full-time members...who work primarily on honey bee research' (National Conference, 22/7/98). Two of these, including herself, are based in Auckland, two are at Ruakura, Hamilton, and one is in Palmerston North. The 'bee group' run apiaries of twelve beehives in Auckland and 200 hives at Ruakura for research purposes. She alludes to projects being undertaken by group members, and proceeds to discuss two of these in greater depth.

The scientist's presentation animates particular dimensions of the science/craft interface. [This presentation was discussed in more detail in chapter one.] She seems to be aware of the centrality of regional variability in beekeeping, and is familiar with the rhetoric of "those who lift the lid of

beehives". However, she interprets her task as one of educating 'beekeepers' and improving their beekeeping practices. In this way, the scientist is acting out an 'outsider' status in beekeeping by adhering to conventional ways of ordering scientific and craft knowledge. She seems to assume that craft know-how of 'beekeepers' is an easily defined and delimited body of knowledge, and she overlooks ways in which the work practices of 'beekeepers' set limits on the work she can perform (Becker, 1982). The second scientist, however, has a different approach. He begins his presentation by alluding to "a couple of our research projects...that I don't want to talk about, but I will" (National Conference, 22/7/99). This sets the tone for his presentation. He seems to downplay the significance of research undertaken by the 'bee group'. Perhaps he is hoping this will have the opposite effect of making 'beekeepers' more receptive to what he is saying. It may also be a reflection of his 'insider' status in beekeeping: He seems more 'at home' dealing with 'beekeepers' in relation to his colleague. This particular scientist is, incidentally, an ardent user of the electronic-mail beekeeping distribution lists.

The second scientist proceeds to mention a project which the research team were "silly enough last year to go and try". While presenting some of the results, he exclaims,

I am always suspicious when you get data like this that goes in straight lines. (Audience laughs). The reason why I was thinking now that I didn't really want to do the work, and I'd rather not have to mention it, is because *it asked a lot more questions that it would actually answer....* There were all those issues that suddenly arise when you do the work (National Conference, 22/7/98).

Thus, his account illuminates some of the problems in capturing what actually takes place out in the fields doing the bees. He reiterates this point with reference to a project involving field trials:

I'd like to show you a graph...but...*whenever you set up a trial you rely on nature cooperating with what you are going to do.* And for the first time in the history of white clover in New Zealand, they [the Weevil] didn't reproduce at all....Of

course for clover that was really, really good, but if you are doing research on the effect of these things on clover production it was very, very bad (National Conference, 22/7/98).

The scientist's account reveals how research scientists are similarly affected by contingencies and, like beekeepers, must learn to improvise. In beekeeping, research work needs to be performed 'in time' in order to fit the sorts of resources beekeepers have access to and the particular local contexts in which they operate. Thus, a purpose of the research presentations at National Conference can be to provide a forum in which beekeepers and other players with the craft can furnish some feedback.

The second scientist from Horticultural Research also presents a 'users guide' to the Pest Management Strategy (PMS) in a seminar presentation on day two of National Conference. The seminar presentation is useful for comparing his strategies across meeting contexts, and illuminates how he presents material in ways which reinforce the rhetoric of "those who lift the lids of beehives". The research scientist seizes onto issues and specific areas he thinks are of particular concern to 'beekeepers' in relation to the PMS, and he translates the written document into language he thinks they will understand and be able to put into *practice*. The first thing he advises is 'don't panic'. He proceeds to simplify the requirements of the PMS as he sees them, and relies extensively on easy to follow overheads to achieve this. The research scientist's presentation provides an interpretation of the PMS as something which should be taken seriously by beekeepers, but which is not going to be as problematic in practice as they might presume. It is an efficient representation in so far as the scientist informs beekeepers of everything they need to know for their purposes, without wasting their time providing information they do not require, and does this in a way that is accessible to them (Becker, 1996:125).

## THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: National President's Report

In his report for the Annual General Meeting, the National President describes the 1997 National Conference in Nelson as 'a difficult time' for the incoming Executive and 'the membership':

Conference last year was a fairly difficult time, to put it mildly, for your incoming Executive and in consideration of *the membership*, I will not tolerate a repetition of what happened last year or anything similar....Please make this an enjoyable, constructive, harmonious conference (National Conference, 22/7/98).

He is presenting a version of the Nelson Conference which at once diverts blame from himself, and aligns him with 'beekeepers': The President was a key member of the incoming Executive in 1997, and he labels both 'the Executive' and beekeepers victims. He continues:

Please remember that we [the Executive] are here to increase the *enjoyment* and *profitability* of Beekeeping, not to get bogged down with rule interpretations, etc.... We have kept our heads down working on beekeeping matters. After all, you the beekeepers - *the people who take the lids off beehives* - are the ones who pay the bills of this Association and we are your representatives (National Conference, 22/7/98).

Other players, like 'wasps', are likely to have different versions of what transpired in that forum. Indeed, during the Annual General Meeting on day three, there is a heated passage concerning confirmation of the minutes of the 1997 Conference. The wasps dispute the minutes as a 'true and correct' record of what took place. It happens that there are errors, omissions and misrepresentations in the minutes, and the wasps are using these to denounce the performance of the Executive Secretary and, by implication, the National President himself. Both the President and the Executive Secretary know the minutes contain mistakes, and concede to some of these straight up in an apparent attempt to pacify the antagonists.

However, the wasps prove they are not going to let the opportunity pass, and eventually the President rules to adjourn deliberations on the minutes until the following day. By this time he is fielding proposed corrections to the minutes from players on the Conference floor as well as from branch delegates. The 'wasps' are determined that the National President take responsibility for both past and present circumstances. The list administrator, as immediate past President of the Association, is particularly agitated by the state of the 1997 minutes. Their condition directly implicates his performance as National President, and it was events at the Nelson Conference which culminated in his resignation from the formal position. Hence, the players are fighting for a 'proper' rendition of those events in order to designate culpability. It becomes a contest to see who or what group can claim superior political knowledge in order to hold sway in the national field and, thereby, to increase or conserve positions in beekeeping. The President and the list administrator vie for 'meaning in what is [largely] confusion for others, and to act decisively' by basing their behaviour increasingly on what they anticipate (Dalton, 1959:254). This means positioning themselves like chess players in order to compel other players, and each other, to carry out predictable lines of action. Padgett and Ansell describe these 'strategic games':

...positional play is the maneuvering of opponents into the forced clarification of their (but not your) tactical lines of action. Locked-in commitment to lines of action, and hence to goals, is the product not of individual choice but at least as much of others' successful "ecological control" over you (Padgett, 1981, cited in Padgett and Ansell, 1993:1264).

These processes further enlighten why wasps find the President's 'informalist' strategies threatening. He does not consistently adhere to procedure, and this makes his lines of action in pursuit of organisational goals indeterminate and uncertain. If the tables were turned, it is likely to be a role reversal.

A significant portion of the President's report in the Annual General Meeting also relates to the PMS and the NBA's alternative proposal to

implement the Strategy. This is the first occasion many players hear in detail of the NBA proposal. While it is never actually taken to the vote at the Special Meeting on day four (see below), the wasps believe that the National President will place it back on the agenda at next year's Conference. It is not that the wasps as a group are vigorously opposed to the idea; rather, they question the ability and competence of existing Executive members to effectively implement and manage such a system. They do not consider these players the 'right' people to be entering into negotiations with Government. In other words, the wasps perceive a discrepancy between the skills and competencies of existing Executive players and the *formal* positions they are expected to perfect. As subscribers to the 'NZBkprs' electronic-mail distribution list, these players had caught whiff of the NBA proposal when a letter was distributed to branch Secretaries by the National President advising of the two resolutions. [The list administrator is also a branch secretary, and the letter is immediately reproduced on the list.] The issue incites critical speculation on the distribution list concerning the President's actions and of the timing of the letter. Participants fear that the NBA proposal reflects the President's resolve to free himself from Government involvement in beekeeping; rather than representing the interests of beekeepers and 'the organisation'.

The President's philosophy supporting the NBA proposal happens to be consistent with a users-pays ethos imposed by the current free-market environment: He wants beekeepers to take responsibility for their own disease control measures, and suggests it is in their long-term interests that the National Association implement, rather than simply fund, as much of the PMS as possible. He uses the fact that MAF is soon to become a state-owned enterprise and a 'profit-driven' entity as a bargaining tool. Thus, his particular stance on the PMS illustrates 'opportunism, pragmatism and performance' on his part (Law, 1994:75). The President is being 'sensitive to shifting opportunities and demands' and is attempting to capitalise on these in ways which draw on available physical and human resources in beekeeping (ibid.). His report encapsulates and extends these strategies in relation to the diverse audience at Conference.

For example, the National President also embarks on a critique of electronic-mail distribution lists. This is a contentious issue amongst players and is conducive to conflict: Electronic networks are presently being used by wasps to communicate with each other as political tools (see chapter four). Some players perceive the electronic networks as a counter or shadow organisation to the NBA, and this is how they are regarded by the National President who views them as a mouthpiece for his opponents. The President asserts,

You [*the beekeeper*] are not normally the ones who write the critical E-mails. I believe that you, *the beekeepers*, should not have to put up with some of the derogatory comments we have seen on the E-mail. I believe that you, *the beekeepers*, should not have to put up with increased administration expenses by these same few members (National Conference, 22/7/98).

He, nevertheless, proceeds to claim electronic-mail as part of 'the Executive's' means of communicating with members in the future, demonstrating that he is not adverse to information and communication technologies in administering national strategies in beekeeping.

In this respect, the National President is treating computer technologies as both assets and liabilities: He is attempting "to have a resource that can be justified or assessed by more than one standard of measure" in order to maintain future options (Stark, 1996:18). Thus, he too is trying to hedge his bets in the present de-regulated environment to create or preserve room for tactical manoeuvre. This is how he responds to the strategies of opposing players, with the hope of inducing positive outcomes for his 'associative ties' with fellow Executive members, for players he identifies as 'the membership', and for the 'National Association' as a whole. (Stark, 1996:25). The President accepts the potential of computer technologies to reduce costs and enhance efficiency, but does not want to displace traditional fora for players to interact face-to-face. This is because he sees fora, like regional branch meetings, as "great place[s] where beekeepers...discuss beekeeping problems and learn beekeeping". He suggests,



Yes, they could learn it over the internet, but there's nothing like 20 people sitting around the room and talking about why you bee-boxes are going rotten (Interview, August, 1998).

By confirming the role of computer technologies in beekeeping, though, the National President places himself in a double bind. He refers to 'the Executive's' intention to distribute floppy discs to members for inputting information necessary to implement the PMS. Such a system would displace the apiary register currently administered by MAF Quality Management, now AgriQuality New Zealand. It is, therefore, consistent with the President's resolve that NBA members regulate themselves when it comes to disease control (see below). He suggests government and external contractors are not "motivated into doing the job as effectively, simply, and cheaply as possible, thus saving the beekeeper's money" (National Conference, 22/7/98). He also purports to believe that a high percentage of 'beekeepers' now have access to computers, and that most branches are likely to have computer experts within their membership.

However, a marked proportion of NBA players communicating via computer are marketers and honey exporters, like 'wasps', and public players and hobbyist beekeepers; rather than commercial producers. 'Beekeepers' may often be too busy 'lifting the lids of beehives' to have the time or inclination to embrace computer technologies. In fact, owning a computer may infringe conceptions beekeepers have of themselves doing the bees and working with nature. Being on a computer is associated with physical inertia, sitting behind a desk, and working the 9.00am to 5.00pm routine. Beekeepers seldom adhere to such a 'lifestyle', even if they aspire to it. These aspects of production work are explored in chapter one. On the other hand, beekeepers may feel they need to purchase computers and go on-line simply to keep up with what the 'wasps' are up to. The formal integration of computers in the National Association, then, may have unintended consequences for the President; elevating the wasps to pivotal and 'legitimate' positions within the NBA.

## THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: Committee Reports

The presentation of annual reports by Chairpersons of the various national sub-committees at National Conference is an important way 'the Executive' goes about procuring accountability on the part of committee members; yet these reports also empower committee members to impress their points of view on a wider audience. It follows that these presentations may simultaneously fulfil and undo ordering strategies of different players. For instance, when the Marketing Committee Chairman attempts to muster support for the Committee's activities and level of funding on day three, his report draws antagonistic questions from members on the floor. He is being made a scapegoat on this occasion for a decision made by 'the Executive' concerning the contract of the NBA's generic marketing consultant.

The Marketing Chairman, who is also a wasp, deploys language he knows 'beekeepers' will readily understand by translating in dollar terms the concrete benefits he sees accruing to beekeepers from allocating 25% of the commodity levy to marketing. He works it out that while marketing costs individual beekeepers very little, it directly improves their financial position as *producers*. He also re-presents the history of marketing to counter the perception of marketing as something 'new' and 'controversial' in beekeeping. Thus, the chairman's report is both an attempt to mobilise widespread support for generic marketing, and a defence of this player's own position and interests in beekeeping as a marketer.

When the Chairman of the Pest Management Strategy (PMS) Review Committee delivers his report at National Conference on the following day, he relates how Committee members had recommended to 'the Executive' that the MAF proposal for implementing the PMS be adopted instead of the NBA proposal. The Committee players believe this is in 'the best interests' of beekeepers and would produce 'the best result for *the industry*':

We were very politely told that it wasn't really the job of the review committee to do so. We are obviously very disappointed that we didn't get the green light....The Committee I have to say has...found itself in the difficult position of being effectively sidelined and cut out of the information completely...(National Conference, 23/7/98).

Committee members are renouncing their own responsibility by maintaining that 'the Executive' has acted unilaterally in developing the NBA alternative to the MAF tender. It may be that certain players on the Executive perceive the PMS Review Committee as a 'wasp's colony'. However, a 'wasp' has a different story of who the infiltrators or troublemakers are:

I would say that the PMS committee is *the* important committee. More important than the NBA which actually, its got quite funny in the last couple of years because I've watched that happen to the point where I was trying to encourage the NBA to not *second best* the PMS committee – in that we hired them, we appointed them, we should *trust* them. It is a sub-committee of the NBA, and yet often the short-term political decisions that the Executive members make would not be as good for *the industry* as the long-term stability that the PMS is providing (Interview, August, 1998).

The wasp believes the PMS Review Committee has 'to a great extent' been successful in creating the stability he deems necessary.

Both situations speak to the relationship between 'the Executive' and the various national sub-committees it creates. As a general body, 'the Executive' carries out a broad mandate and represents beekeepers in communications with national government. The sub-committees are specialist entities comprising members with distinct skills and expertise. Their tasks are presumably to give direction to 'the Executive' and make recommendations in specific areas. However, the respective roles of Executive players and members on national sub-committees are disputed because membership overlaps: Members on 'the Executive' typically take up positions on at least one of the sub-committees. Moreover, certain players allege that those on *national* sub-committees are simultaneously fulfilling personal and *local*

interests in beekeeping. There is also concern amongst beekeepers that sub-committee compositions are not sufficiently representative of 'those lifting the lids of beehives. For instance, it is alleged that the Marketing Committee comprises only dominant packers and exporters.

A formal position holder describes the processes of constituting national sub-committees, and relates some of the difficulties securing a cross-section of players:

(C)ommittees are reviewed for structure, people dropping off, or do we need to replace people because they haven't performed....It tends to be pretty much rolling people over from year to year. So if you get on a committee and don't rock the boat...there is a very high possibility you will get re-appointed the following year....We've attempted to target a wide range of skills and viewpoints, but the industry is such that you don't get them. You tend to get people on committees...who have their own personal and private agendas....They can have one, I believe, inside information early and, two, they can have some influence (Interview, August, 1998).

When a wasp describes the same process, his account reveals tensions and similarities in how differently positioned players are viewing 'the system':

...it's usually a buck fight, and there are payoffs, there are arguments, but to some extent that's more stable than the Executive itself. They [the Executive members] are not so likely to remove somebody unless they have a good reason to do it (Interview, August, 1998).

The wasp also recounts how the PMS Review Committee came to be established by players. He was an Executive member at the time:

...we are going to have to formulate the PMS. We don't know how to do it, we don't have the time to do it as Executive members ourselves, let's set up a Committee. Its got to be of *respective people*; its got to be a *range of ages, geography, nature of operation, and experience* within 'the industry'....It had to be people who were actually committed to doing this, and there had to be people who were opposed to doing this (Interview, August, 1998).

This illustrates that as formal position holders, the groups – wasps and Executive players - tend to engage in similar strategies in respect of national sub-committees. The strategies each group deploys reflect, and are an effect of, which group happens to be holding sway in the National Association at the time.

In practice, membership of national sub-committees seems to be a mechanism employed by players not presently occupying formal positions, to assume central positions in beekeeping. Participating in committees means not only being privy to information, but actively partaking in the production of knowledge. It means engaging in modes of ordering vis-à-vis limited numbers of other strategically placed players and, consequently, being embedded in scales of action which are both constraining and empowering. This enlightens why wasps wish to establish a *financial management committee* in the NBA (see below). They see it as crucial for securing accountability on the part of current Executive players, and fostering continuity in implementing national strategies through 'the National Association'. This is because they regard membership on sub-committees as relatively accessible by virtue of their particular skills in beekeeping.

## THE SPECIAL MEETING: Switching fora

In anticipation of a Special Meeting called to discuss resolutions for a levy increase, as well as the two proposals for implementing the PMS, the retiring Executive player assumes a crucial role. He uses his dual capacities as Executive player and life member to urge beekeepers to support the MAF option for the PMS. It is unclear whether he is acting in open defiance of the National President; although his speech does appear instrumental in causing the President to abandon the NBA alternative to the MAF proposal, at least for the time being. The President had been relying on securing the vote of "those who lift the lids of beehives" for the NBA option at the Special Meeting. He has already intimated to them that a considerable rise in levy will be needed to adopt the MAF proposal. This is despite attempts by wasps to attribute increased costs to areas like administration in order to implicate the present Executive Secretary.

Moreover, the National President knows the apiary levy is a touchy issue for 'beekeepers', especially those in particular beekeeping regions like Canterbury who have experienced marked increases in their levies recently. He is hoping they will support a cheaper alternative for the PMS, namely to do the job themselves. It is possible, nevertheless, that the President is using the retiring Executive player to express what he actually considers best for 'the Association' without being seen to back down from previous his intention; that is, to take up the MAF (AgriQuality New Zealand) proposal for implementing the PMS. The retiring Executive player, by virtue of his experience and reputation, may be fulfilling a role which "functions to communicate things that no one wants to assume responsibility for knowing, doing, or being associated with" (Dalton, 1959:233). Life members are selected to perform such roles because they tend to know everyone and to possess inside knowledge on issues. They may often demonstrate a 'loyalty' or 'willingness' to perform, yet can also be chosen for an "aptness in 'talking out of turn' and in carrying 'secrets' to the right people which assures almost predictable communication" (ibid.).

Beekeepers appear to take on board the gravity of the situation as depicted by the retiring Executive player. He reminds players of the seriousness of what they are about to deal with, namely, the implementation of a comprehensive system to eliminate American Foulbrood in beehives. The current Vice President, who is also a life member, happens to support what the retiring Executive member is saying. He subsequently informs players that 'the industry' is better off paying a little extra to get the PMS in place, rather than having members of the Executive "doing something they are not meant to do". The Vice President is also a member on the PMS Committee, and he has previously attempted to persuade the National President to drop the NBA proposal for at least the first year.

Both life members are using their formal and informal positions to good effect. Like the list administrator, they know how to play the beekeepers; although this is because they are beekeepers themselves and it comes 'naturally' to them. They are endowed with inherent capacities to appraise what is taking place, and, being *Executive* members, are also in *formal* positions to adjudicate on proceedings. Their actions bridge formal and informal processes because they possess a combination of political control and social clout. Thus, both life members are assuming "multiple roles from the formal position, while...interpret[ing], access[ing] and cross-referenc[ing] the role repertoires of associates" in order to alter the game plan of the National President (Dalton, 1959:258).

The retiring Executive player has a reputation, especially amongst beekeepers, for not saying much, but for being adept at summing up situations, saying what needs to be said and no more, and getting the timing spot on. The degree of respect and influence he carries is apparent in how players relate to him and 'listen' when he speaks. This says a lot about his ordering strategies. He performs like a 'visionary', in possession of both long-term vision and charisma, and his position implies "special and privileged access to ultimate truths", especially in the eyes of 'beekeepers' (Law, 1994:79). The fact that the retiring Executive player stands before players and says the things he does reinforces their perceptions of him. He exclaims,

I view you as friends, and we sort of have debates about the rights and wrongs of things, and I expect to talk once or twice through Conference this time.... Wherever I've finished up in this Industry has only been made possible because other people have made it possible (National Conference, 23/7/98).

At the Pollination Association meeting, incidentally, this player had wandered up to the front of room to speak. His actions effected a departure from the informal strategies being deployed by the National President, as Chair, to order the meeting. Indeed, the President, who had thus far remained in his seat, felt compelled to rise also. The following is how a wasp accounts for the strategies of this life member:

[There are] different types of *power* – there's the power of elders, power of manipulative control - you know - coercion, and there's the power of knowledge, and the power of money. If [the player] has a form of power it is...power of *respect for perception* (Interview, August, 1998).

During the Special Meeting in relation to the resolutions proposing graduated levy increases, the wasps also attempt to circumvent the actions of the National President. One wasp, who is also a South Island branch delegate, exclaims,

Mr Chairman, the reason why I raise this issue is because, not because I want to make it difficult for anyone, in fact I want to make the decision easier for the Executive. We've just heard an impassioned appeal by [the retiring Executive member] as to why we should be reasonable about all this, and I want to be reasonable, *but I also want to follow the rules...*(National Conference, 23/7/98).

He proceeds to illustrate how the situation of delegates having to vote on the four resolutions at the Special Meeting is unconstitutional. He maintains that at *special* meetings the right to vote, or method of voting, is unlike that of *annual general* meetings because it requires delegates to cast only the votes they have received from branch members in relation to what is being voted upon. There is no room for delegates to 'best guess' their branch. He also



suggests that as a number of branches have not discussed, or voted on, the levy resolutions prior to Conference, their branch delegates are unable to cast votes in the *Special Meeting*.

Moreover, the wasp alleges that it is 'actually quite dangerous' to consider the four resolutions at the *Special Meeting*. Decisions in this context are binding on the Executive, unlike in the *Conference of Branch Delegates* with regard to branch remits. If all the resolutions are lost, and he believes this might is highly likely, the Executive is bound to the status quo. Wasps, and other players who subscribe to the electronic-mail distribution lists, consider there is inadequate budgetary information to determine which, if any, of the resolutions is actually necessary to meet costs. Each resolution proposes a different increase in the apiary levy: 10%, 15%, 20%, and 25% respectively.

A way out is proposed by the list administrator, and his 'recommendations' are seen as 'very wise' by the National President. They involve going back to the *Conference of Branch Delegates* in order to consider the levy resolutions as *late remits*.

*List administrator:...*So I am suggesting that we deal with the questions during the Conference of Branch Delegates and then subsequently confirm that at the Annual Meeting which will give us a resolution appropriate for the commodity levy bee products order and allow us to not be challenged on it as to the validity of notice or whatever (National Conference, 23/7/98).

For the President, this course is seen as a plausible means for bringing about the levy increase Executive players deem necessary. He shows that he is open to suggestions from his opponents, and is adaptable in achieving goals. This is consistent with his informalist strategies and 'enterprising' role (Law, 1994). For wasps, the proposed course of action means changing fora so that 'procedure' can be better followed, whilst allowing full discussion of financial reasons for a levy increase. It enables branch delegates to *formally* exercise discretion as to how they cast branch members votes.

When the National President subsequently places the four resolutions to the vote as late remits, the first three are lost resoundingly. The vote in respect of the forth resolution – the highest levy increase - is tied. Some members have assumed there is a fifth option, namely no levy increase. There are sighs of exasperation and exclamations of ‘oh no’ from players when it becomes apparent that a *poll vote* is going to be called. A number of delegates leave their seats to approach the Chair, and chaos sets in. The poll vote is unexpected and provokes both laughter and solemnity. The branch delegates are perplexed. A poll vote is always a complicated and uncertain process, and involves tallying individual votes cast in regional settings according to how delegates believe branch members would have responded to the proposed minimal levy increase. Some delegates delight in improvising and being ingenious in this context; whereas others, anxious to ‘go by the book’, are agitated by the lack of written prescripts guiding their actions. It is argued, therefore, that ambiguity induced by the poll vote situation benefits players “most able to absorb, or resolve or utilize, conflict for personal and organisation ends” (Dalton, 1959:258). This is because,

In *qualifiedly* accomplishing its rational ends, the [situation] unwittingly coerces [players] to *qualifiedly* realize the personalizing urges innate to them. In the process extreme formalists and informalists are pained at the compromise of their respective ideals (Dalton, 1959:258).

It works out that the Canterbury delegates are well-placed in the poll vote as they are able to exercise discretion on behalf of *three* branches. The main delegate, in particular, plays out a highly strategic role. He has been acting as delegate for the West Coast Branch throughout the national setting. The West Coast Branch is the smallest of the NBA Branches, and its members often recruit their delegate from a neighbouring branch. Moreover, the delegate for the South Canterbury Branch has left Conference early this year and, being a friend of the main Canterbury Delegate, has commissioned him to act in his capacity for the remainder of Conference. The Canterbury delegate, in order to successfully juggle his other responsibilities, passes over responsibility for the Canterbury vote to his co-delegate.

The main Canterbury delegate is one of the first delegates approaching the President's table when the voting papers are handed out. In casting votes as he subsequently does, he improvises. He knows his co-delegate can cast all Canterbury members' votes against the proposed levy increase. On the basis of what the South Canterbury delegate has told him, how that Delegate has voted in relation to the Canterbury levy remit, and his own *local* knowledge of beekeeping in South Canterbury, the Canterbury delegate believes he can also cast the total number of votes of branch members against the resolution. The knowledge which allows him to do so, and to maintain a 'clear conscience', transcends the *national* setting and has accumulated over time. It is provoked by long-standing association between the neighbouring branches, and friendships and conflicts between Canterbury and South Canterbury players. The Canterbury delegate then figures that casting all of the West Coast Branch's votes against the resolution is unlikely to affect the result. Dalton aptly suggests that,

the individual [branch delegate] is caught in a scheme of rational, emotional, social, and ethical claims. Whatever his responses, he cannot escape some measure of internal conflict....(H)e moves or is pushed, according to his resourcefulness, through various stages of grappling with elusive certainties....The system forces an uncertain freedom on him in the sense that he may supplement and adapt existing official methods, or where these are inadequate, add new ones that square with organizational propriety....But his liberty is curtailed by his agreements with similarly free associates. Hence he finds that his power of choice can be a tacit command to compromise (Dalton, 1959:258).

The poll vote is lost, and this provokes divergent responses from players. It appears the National President has not foreseen this eventuality as it leaves the National Association in a precarious financial situation. He hopes players "realise the ramifications of what you have just voted for". At this, a wasp promptly retorts, "I hope the Executive realises the ramifications of the signals...we have just sent you". The wasps are proclaiming victory. They believe 'the Executive' has been unable to effect a levy increase because

'procedure' was not followed. One wasp gets an opportunity to impress what he would like to see happen, namely the development of a financial management *sub-committee* for the NBA:

I don't believe that the fiscal responsibility level in the Association is high enough....*You're* faced now with a very difficult situation...with a situation that *we as a membership* have decided we do not want to increase *our* levy when we are told there are going to be increasing costs in the future....I think the problem...was that there was insufficient information...to make clear decisions (National Conference, 23/7/98).

The development of a national sub-committee represents, on the face of it, an official means of administering the Association's finances, and would provide those serving on it the protection of *formal* mandates.

## CONCLUSION:

The above discussions have attempted to illuminate how interlocking strategies of different players in the national field are dynamic processes of ordering which at once enact and transform what is witnessed as the National Association. The Association as organisation is understood here as networks of people cooperating (Becker, 1982:35). It is an effect or product of relations between players; rather than an entity or structure existing independently of them. Thus, there is no such thing as 'the organisation' because the activities of sets of players in the national field outpace organisational arrangements players use to attribute clarity to their relations and to make sense of their shared environments. What players see as the NBA is continually reshaped through processes which bridge disparate ordering attempts, and unite players in a quest for *national* identity through restating the national field and the stakes being offered. )

It is argued that the national forum is characterised by struggles between players contesting their positions in beekeeping in and across

different meeting contexts. This is being accomplished through ordering strategies that are contingent upon player's interests and needs in beekeeping, shaping their relative capacities to participate and exert an influence. The players are vying to conserve or increase species of *capital* they possess or are seen to possess which position them in the national field and enable them to wield a power in order to attempt to hold sway over national action in beekeeping. Their strategies take form in various meeting contexts composing the national setting, but also transcend and rework these contexts. Meetings are deployed by players as tools to order their relations with others through providing interpretive contexts which at once orient and are surpassed by their strategies. However, tactical manoeuvres on the part of different players are not always determinate or certain, and can present unintended contingencies which require novel and unplanned responses.

The chapter has been arranged to elucidate juxtaposing strategies of players across meeting contexts, as well as to provide examples of meeting contexts embroiling interacting strategies of individuals and groups. The analysis reveals how informal and formal strategies are implicit in the field of play. On one hand, ties of trust and reciprocity between players, provoked by the work they perform in beekeeping, shape species of *capital* they are seen to possess in the national field relative to each other. On the other hand, formal procedures comprise understandings previously accumulated in struggles in the field involving ad-hoc arrangements and prior formulations of written rules. *Habitus*, embodied knowledge of players which makes the existence of the national field possible, also allows players to participate in the field. It is realised through a mix of formal and informal processes necessary for players to form co-operative links in order to carry out their work. In other words, what are taken as immanent laws of the national field always encompass informal practices as well as formally established ways of conducting relations.

The Special Meeting at the 1998 National Conference resulted in an apparent stalemate situation concerning the financial situation of the National Association precisely because a distinction between formal and informal

processes, expressed through disparate ordering strategies, had become highly visible. The players viewed “their world as a battleground and...[had] become caught up in a battle for control, while at the same time viewing one another’s activities as ‘out of control’” (Schwartzman, 1993:40). Put another way, their struggles restated the national field and the stakes on offer; thus, reconfiguring the distribution of species of capital defining the field at that particular point in time, and reevaluating game strategies of individuals and groups. Schwartzman notes that meetings can be “responsible for the construction of both order and disorder...so they must be conceptualized as occasions with both conservative...and transformative capacities (1993:40). The Special Meeting induced a situation of uncertainty and ambiguity for players because of alternative and, at times, conflicting accounts of what was happening or should be happening. This situation encouraged formal position holders to devise “new and initially questionable means” in order to carry out earlier decisions and planned courses of action (Dalton, 1959:243-244). In response, other players sought to preserve the status quo, at least until the issue of NBA finances could be worked through in other settings post Conference.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE 'CANTERBURY' WAY

#### INTRODUCTION

Local players in beekeeping meet face-to-face regularly through their regional branch of the NBA. They tend to meet once a month to organise finances and fund-raising activities; to deliberate on topical issues and events in beekeeping; and to discuss policies and practices of national position holders. Monthly meetings may also incorporate presentations by guest speakers. Every year, branch players have the opportunity to prepare *remits* in their branch meetings for presentation at National Conference in July. Branch *remits* are statements of recommendation to Executive players in carrying out national scales of action in beekeeping. In the Canterbury case, official meetings of the Branch are arranged for the last Tuesday of every month, except November, December and January. Members stage an annual field-day in November, and December and January coincide with the festive period as well as tending to be the busiest months for beekeepers.

This chapter focuses on branch meetings as contexts for locally embedded players to assemble themselves face-to-face and engage in co-ordinating their beekeeping activities; thereby constructing *regional* knowledge. The chapter is about rhetorical devices used by different players to articulate themselves as players in beekeeping, and to collectively formulate branch *remits* in shared contexts. The strategies of players reflect and enforce their respective work interests, and are an effect of co-operative links they have with each other to perform their work. A case study is deployed of the Canterbury Branch whose members produced the more 'contentious' *remits* at National Conference in 1998, and whose actions recreated the militant reputation of 'the branch' in the eyes of other players. *Remit* meetings are seen as mechanisms through which players represent themselves and their work to each other, whereby acting on and reshaping their co-operative links.

The meetings are also about how players come to enact what is collectively regarded as 'the regional branch'. Players reproduce 'the branch's' reputation through renegotiating a sense of the collective "we" that is based on tacit understandings of beekeeping in the area which become embodied in branch remits.

A range of players with diverse interests and capacities participate in branch meetings. 'Beekeepers', packers, marketers, 'pollinators', exporters, and Executive members all attend. Their respective interests and capacities are expressed in novel ways because of ways in which they are differently immersed in local and national scales of action which cut across and compose regional settings. The players enjoy differential access to information, yet reside in close geographical proximity. This means complex webs of relations characterise how beekeeping gets ordered in regional settings. Remit meetings can be understood as frames for 'exercises in ordering' on the part of players expressing their interests and needs in beekeeping (Law, 1994:43), and telling stories to weave 'mutually reinforcing interpretations' and shared experiences (Weick, 1995; Orr, 1997). The object is to "establish some sort of stability and predictability under conditions that work against this" (Weick, 1995:153). As face-to-face encounters, thus, branch meetings enable particular configurations of geographically embedded players to constitute and reconstitute what is 'officially' recognised and experienced as 'the branch'.

It is by narrating experiences in branch meetings that players create and remould shared meanings, values and assumptions of beekeeping in their area that are equated with *formal* processes. These understandings filter players' interpretations of events, each other, and of the *region* where they keep bees. Hence, stories "shape and reshape the way the individuals experience their organisation" (Schwartzman, 1993:44). They are a means through which players go about creating organisational reality, anticipating future ordering activities, and making sense of their places in beekeeping, at least for the moment. Stories involve players reconstructing past events to enact present circumstances and affirm what 'the branch' is all about. This is especially the case where perceived negative outcomes are associated with earlier actions and have to be accounted for. Boden observes,



When people talk they are simultaneously and reflexively talking their relationships, organization, and whole institutions into action, or into 'being'....Structure is thus realized as *action*" (1994:14).

The ways in which players tell about themselves and their work in branch meetings exemplify ordering attempts to create durability and stability in their relations, and continuity and coherence in their sense of selves. Constructing accounts through storytelling involves simplifying 'history' and attributing 'order' to past events. Players, especially Canterbury wasps who are marketing oriented, purport to see sequences and patterns in past and present events. This is a means of making sense of those events in terms of their own interests and capacities. In doing so, they may over-simplify causality and the circumstances leading to events. For example, discussions on branch remits embroil the Canterbury players in "orderly interaction around *arguing* in an effort to reduce the variety in beliefs that are thought to be relevant, variety in what is noticed, and variety in what is prophesised" (Weick, 1995:134; emphasis in original). Law advises that,

Pools of order are illusory, but even the illusions are the exception. They do not last for long....And they are the product, the outcome, or the effect, of a lot of hard-work that may occasionally be more or less successfully hidden behind an appearance of ordered simplicity (1994:5).

Accordingly, this chapter contemplates the construction of 'order' through branch remits in meeting contexts, and proceeds to show how this 'order' is subsequently undone in different settings. Branch remits embody ordering attempts because they freeze the state of play in regional settings at particular moments in time, and are reinterpreted and redefined by different *regional* players and *national* players in the national setting.

As face-to-face encounters, branch meetings provide players with multiple cues to evaluate each other's actions in attempts to induce order and create predictability in shared environments (Weick, 1995:170). Depending on the information that is required, however, these situations can inhibit certain players from making sense of events. For example, when Canterbury players are discussing the performance of the Executive Secretary in relation to two

remit proposed by Canterbury wasps, the situation is marked by *uncertainty*: Beekeepers are uncertain whether there is a problem, of what that problem is, how it was caused, and of ways in which it might be resolved. This is because the wasps are skilfully telling of a predicament which is unusual and irregular in their experience, but is, more crucially, beyond the knowledge or ordinary experience of beekeepers. Consequently, the strategies of wasps are realised in regional settings where they are strategically placed to introduce 'new' or fresh information and to create or exploit situations of *uncertainty*. Put another way, face-to-face contexts are productive for these players when they are able to control cues for processing on the part of others (Weick, 1995:99). This suggests that the definition and diagnosis of problems are shaped by players' particular positions in and across beekeeping fora and, in this case, also by their relations with the Executive Secretary. Beekeepers are likely to have indirect or intermittent contact with the Executive Secretary on routine, administrative matters; whereas wasps, as previous position holders and members of national sub-committees, work directly with the Secretary on a regular basis.

In situations of *ambiguity*, on the other hand, too much or conflicting information may actually perpetuate misunderstandings on the part of players in regional contexts (Weick, 1995:92). Deliberations on a remit proposing to modify the basis on which commodity levies are payable to the Association, for example, divulge different ideas and experiences of Canterbury players concerning their levies. It is recognised that the present system has problems, and the issue is whether these are 'teething' problems or problems of a more fundamental nature. Hence, multiple and, at times, conflicting accounts espoused by variously positioned players give rise to *ambiguity* concerning how the problem might be solved and what a 'fair' levy system might be. The issue provokes reflexivity and occasions 'sensemaking' on the part of players seeking to reorder ways in which they levy themselves and others in beekeeping (Weick, 1995). Beekeepers are able to disclose various tactics in managing their beehives to avoid increased levy payments; whilst other players, such as wasps, extend reasons for changing to the current system. The discussions embody struggles for turn-making on the part of players exchanging and contesting information, and reflect their divergent interests and needs in beekeeping. The Canterbury wasps, as packers and marketers

who no longer own beehives, contribute relatively little financially to the Association. They are less able to talk about how the levy system is impacting on their operations. This means beekeepers are relatively well placed to enforce their ordering strategies arising out of processes of 'lifting the lids of beehives' in this situation.

The following explicates what takes place in Canterbury Branch meetings when particular configurations of heterogeneous players and materials combine to produce *regional* knowledge. The three 'critical' remits fashioned by branch players for the 1998 National Conference are analysed in detail, and are traced into the national setting. Discussions on each remit reveal a peculiar mix of competing and overlapping discourses of players, and illustrate ways in which their strategies intersect and evolve in regional settings. At National Conference, the ordering strategies of differently-embedded players in beekeeping come to light, and these are pitted against the strategies of Canterbury players as embodied in the branch remits. The Canterbury remits are contested and reworked in ways which interweave collective and individual reputations of the Canterbury players, and which also frustrate their ordering attempts to define national strategies in beekeeping. Moreover, the treatment of branch remits in the national forum feeds into regional and local settings, reworking the co-operative links between players.

## THE PLAYERS: Executive Members

In the Canterbury Branch, there are two members who are currently on 'the Executive'. These players assume privileged status as confidants of information and as adjudicators of what takes place in branch meetings. Others respect their *formal* positions in beekeeping, regardless of how 'the Executive' as a group is faring in the eyes of 'the membership'. This is because they are seen to take on the considerable responsibilities and time commitments associated with performing *formal* roles. Executive players are *local* players by virtue of keeping bees in the region; although they are not always branded 'real' beekeepers because of the time they can expend fulfilling Executive functions. Full-time commercial producers may contest

their competency as 'beekeepers', and this means being an Executive member can be both an asset and a liability. Moreover, the capacity of Executive players to contain information flows in branch meetings depends on the relative positions of the other players. While national players may endeavour to censor what is said and what goes on by appealing to formal processes, their efforts are often frustrated by the actions of others present and the knowledge they happen to possess.

Executive players can adopt strategic positions in regional settings because they have the capacity to carry out ordering strategies that bridge local and national scales of actions. They can act out multivalent identities by playing more than one game simultaneously. For instance, it is not always clear from the point of view of players whether the actions of Executive players present are attributable to *national* interests or *local* affiliations. By virtue of this positioning across beekeeping fora, Executive players can act as whistle blowers. They may furnish fellow branch members with more information than their 'official' capacities prescribe by choosing to ally with local players over particular issues. In this way, they can prompt consideration of 'new' ideas and innovative ways of organising national strategies through regional contexts, and/or seek to conserve or reshape their of co-operative links with local players. On the other hand, Executive players can act in favour of national players by disclosing the strategies of local players, espousing discourses of orthodoxy, and enforcing mechanisms of control. In other words, Executive players in regional contexts can also elect to play out 'allotted roles' according to their official mandates (Law, 1995:77).

The high visibility of Executive players in regional settings presents positive and negative contingencies for these players. Their position ensures that they pay heed to interests and concerns of local players in branch meetings because they can, ultimately, be held accountable for their actions by these players. Executive members are nominated and elected by fellow local players, and their performance is constantly monitored in regional contexts, including branch field-days and promotional events. Beekeepers are able to use Executive players present at their meetings to glean *official* information on issues. Likewise, they can acquire *unofficial* information from wasps to challenge these official representations. As members of 'the

Executive', however, Executive players who participate in regional settings must also demonstrate allegiance to fellow national players. This means that they may adopt strategies to reconcile conflicting loyalties to different groups in ways which are "sensitive to shifting opportunities and demands"; hence, embracing their sphinx-like qualities (Law, 1995:75). To paraphrase Dalton,

[An Executive member] must reconcile the complex outlooks and compromising techniques of his [peers] with the relatively direct and uncompromising approaches of [fellow local players]....he knows, or is learning, that though situations are in theory subject to rules, rules become less rigid when following them is likely to thwart [national interests]....Aware of this condition, responsible [players] build a wider latitude for action (1959:248, 252-253).

### Canterbury 'wasps'

Two members of the Canterbury Branch are wasps who, by virtue of their interests and skills in beekeeping, want to exercise control over national strategies and reclaim 'formal' positions in beekeeping. These players attend branch meetings to organise their work, and are well placed to pronounce on the performance of formal roles by existing role occupants. Wasps are seeking to further both their craft and political interests through participation in their regional settings. Branch meetings provide occasions to form and rework ties with locally embedded players and precipitate the formation of business relations. Social networking, especially via regional settings, is important for wasps to access and buy in honey and bee products from producers within the region. This is consistent with expectations of these players' roles as packers and exporters on the part of beekeepers. Branch meetings are forums in which wasps can market themselves through rhetorical devices aimed at increasing or conserving their positions in beekeeping relative to players treated as 'the membership'. The meetings are, therefore, an important means by which wasps can regain their sense of place and identities in beekeeping.

The Canterbury wasps, as previous producers of honey now specialising in honey packing and distribution, are attempting to realign their skills and

knowledge with their 'new' positions in beekeeping (Mouzelis, 1994). In the global marketplace, they have to constantly innovate and differentiate products to remain competitive. [This informs their participation in electronic networks, discussed in Chapter four, as a bid to create and secure economies of *scope*, rather than economies of *scale*.] By pursuing these strategies, the wasps are seeking to reshape regional scales of action in line with their particular interests and agendas as marketers. Put another way, they are endeavouring to reconstitute 'authentic' identities by bolstering forms of social status and political clout in regional settings with the hope of being able to exert an influence in the national field (Mouzelis, 1994). These players enjoy relative economic prosperity in beekeeping and have to account for this in regional settings vis-à-vis players adhering to the rhetoric of "those who lift the lids of beehives".

It is argued, therefore, that a purpose of branch meetings for wasps is being able to mobilise human and non-human resources in ways they cannot achieve via information and communication technologies. By interacting face-to-face with beekeepers, the Canterbury wasps are maximising their capacities to discover, invent, and extend forms of knowledge as packers and marketers; as well as keeping abreast of *producer* knowledge. Face-to-face interaction is important because the ordering strategies of the wasps generate contexts of distrust (Law, 1995:182). These players are using branch meetings to nurture the trust of beekeepers at the same time as creating distrust in existing *formal* position holders. In order to put on 'good' performances and to transmit information effectively, wasps need to be convincing in situations of physical co-presence. This has advantages for these players in both regional settings and the national forum. Boden observes,

And, despite advances in telecommunications technology, many levels of organizational activities require situations of mutual physical availability for a wide range of workers; this is so especially for management....(S)ettings that demand rapid innovation and the kind of spontaneity that is essential to creative activities are, in fact, increasingly designing their work environments...to provide for just such face-to-face encounters (Boden, 1994:80).

For wasps then, it may be more important to hold sway in regional settings (and on NBA sub-committees), and manoeuvre in the national field to preserve 'formal' processes until they regain control. They appear to treat branch meetings as places where 'business' gets done as these occasions prove most fruitful in creating and conserving dominant positions.

### The Ashburton 'cavalry'

Beekeepers from Mid Canterbury, or more specifically those keeping bees around the township of Ashburton, comprise a sub-group of Canterbury beekeepers. These players see themselves as being both separate and integral to 'the Canterbury Branch'. For instance, a member describes 'the group' as being the 'guts of the branch'. He also suggests it embodies an attempt by Mid Canterbury beekeepers to disassociate themselves with the Canterbury 'wasps' (Interview, March, 1999). The Ashburton 'cavalry' exemplifies how beekeepers in relatively bounded geographical areas perceive common interests and ways of doing the bees, and seek to order themselves through ties of trust and reciprocity that co-exist interdependently with branch relations. Membership of 'the group' is not synonymous with 'the branch'; although a large number are active participants in branch meetings. Other beekeepers composing 'the branch' keep bees around Christchurch and parts of North Canterbury, and are likely to have established similar groups based on informal relations.

However, not all beekeepers in local areas participate in these close-knit groups. There are players in the Ashburton area, for example, who do not attend either branch meetings or get-togethers of the Ashburton 'cavalry'. These individuals are perceived as 'loose cannons' by other players because they are seen to bring forth subversive tactics into the local setting. 'Loose cannons' tend to be relatively new and/or semi-commercial beekeepers. Their beekeeping practices and *craft* knowledge undermine the *local* knowledge of established beekeepers in the area and the ways in which these players have been ordering themselves. For instance, members of the Ashburton 'cavalry' have worked out over time a set of informal 'rules' or customs that govern how

they keep their bees in relation to each other. 'Loose cannons' are seen to disregard or act without knowledge of these traditional or mutually accepted ways of doing things, and are criticised for not attempting to 'fit in'. They are condemned for 'robbing' *traditional* sites, and are also blamed for incidences of disease in beehives. These individuals are quickly identified, especially if they do not also attend branch meetings.

The Ashburton 'cavalry' composes locally-embedded players encountering problems peculiar to keeping bees in a particular locality. This means the players are endowed with particular dispositions constituted by local practices in keeping bees on the Canterbury plains. The group functions as a breeding ground for local cohesion and the development of strong ties that are necessary in beekeeping. Knowledge of, and intimacy with, *local* conditions in Mid Canterbury, aspects of local knowledge discussed in Chapter one, are taken for granted. The players work within these; reproducing and developing that knowledge in respect of a relatively small number of participants who are not substitutable agents. They are obliged to interact with each other in furtherance of their own interests and in recognition of their mutual interdependency.

Issues and problems faced by players in the Ashburton 'cavalry' are both distinct from, and related to, *regional* concerns. Group members, for instance, depend on the regional setting for communicating their specific interests to national players, as well as for information and feedback on national issues. Players composing the group, who do not attend branch meetings, rely on grassroots players who do for crucial information in maintaining ties of interdependency with players ordering beekeeping through the National Association. The presence of strong ties between group players render inevitable the need for weak ties with other players in *official* settings. Weak ties facilitate access to different information and allow for consideration of new ideas and alternative ways of doing things (Granovetter, 1982). This is because players with whom one forms weak ties are more likely to move in different networks from one's own and have access to different material (Granovetter, 1982:1371).



The Ashburton 'cavalry' appears to have evolved out of local beekeepers first rallying together as a 'pollination group' (see chapter one). Social networking based on ties of friendship and trust, and mutual understandings of each other's interests, skills and competencies as beekeepers precipitated and made possible the organising of this group: It reflects and enforces the ways in which local players in beekeeping order themselves and foster co-operative links in relation to perceived 'outside' players, such as farmers, spray contractors and local seed merchants. Thus, pre-existing patterns of relations between local players, and ordering strategies based on *vocation*, are cemented and reproduced. (Law, 1994). The formation of 'the group' also reworks relations and strategies as doing pollination work is presently emerging as a different way of doing the bees in Mid Canterbury. In other words, the Ashburton 'cavalry' represents a rival branch whose members selectively draw on official regional settings in pursuit of distinct concerns in beekeeping.

## REPUTATIONS

Branches acquire *reputations* on the basis of remits produced and presented by branch members at National Conference. The Canterbury Branch, for instance, is notorious for outspoken members asserting their interests which tend to be at the frontier of beekeeping. It is a relatively large branch and is strong because beekeepers keeping bees in Canterbury flourished under previous conditions favouring the production and sale of white (clover) honey. As early as the 1910s, for example, exports from Canterbury to Britain were prosperous. Light-coloured honey similar to that already produced in Britain was demanded. Moreover, light-coloured honeys have traditionally been perceived as superior quality and, accordingly, have attracted premium prices – especially overseas. This enlightens why Canterbury players are oriented to exports of bulk honey relative to North Island beekeepers who are producers of mainly darker honeys and who have previously disposed of these honeys in smaller packs through door sales from their own yards.

Clover is still the predominant nectar source on the Canterbury Plains. However, with an emphasis on honey varieties and the growing prominence of darker honeys in the global marketplace, Canterbury players are losing traditional advantages. Prices for 'clover' honey stabilise or decrease, and traditional markets are replaced with markets for value added products and innovative uses of dark honey varieties. This fuels discontent on the part of Canterbury players struggling to conserve and generate forms of economic wealth in beekeeping, and causes a diminution of social status and political clout for 'the branch' relative to other branches. These processes account for the emergence of wasps in Canterbury, as well as for the actions of other players vehemently reconstructing the rhetoric of "those who lift the lids of beehives". It is possible there will be a resurgence of clover honey as distinct honey varieties, like wine vintages, become associated with particular geographical *localities*. This is part of the process whereby the *local* and *regional* paradoxically become of strategic importance in the *global* marketplace. Whitcombe aptly observes,

Honey from one kind of flowering plant or tree differs in accordance with local soil, rainfall, and other conditions which affect it...(1955:125)....(T)here is no "best" honey....(T)he probability is that your preference will be for the kind most common in the region where you grew up as a child....(H)oney produced in a particular region is suited to the people living there (1955:153).

As beekeeping bridges generations, a 'branch' may often become synonymous with a particular family in the eyes of other players; thus, interweaving individual and informal identities with collective and formal identities. This means players perceive and relate to other players on the basis of what they know, or think they know, of the other's forebears. Attempting to make sense of players on the basis of past experiences and patterns of interchange with familial members is a common means of understanding and categorising players' positions in beekeeping. Family association with beekeeping is a significant source of symbolic capital for individual members because it creates a network of relationships based on "mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:119). It follows that *reputations* are invariably reproduced and reinforced through players making

strategic use of a family association, as well as by others positioning them to carry out lines of action consistent with past understandings.

This is especially evident in the Canterbury case. For instance, the current National President of the NBA is highly suspicious of Canterbury players. He regards the Branch's *official* representatives at National Conference as untrustworthy, even though the delegates are in fact beekeepers. [The two wasps in the branch had resolved not to be branch delegates after taunting each other in relation to being *official* representatives.] The National President is a Rotorua beekeeper and member of the *Waikato* Branch. His beekeeping operation rivals the packing and exporting company of a *Canterbury* wasp, one of his main adversaries in beekeeping. Both operations are family businesses and the players' forebears are also known to have had confrontations. In the eyes of the National President, 'the Canterbury Branch' equates with a particular family, and this orients him to interpret the actions of individual branch members in ways which are consistent with this association.

The Canterbury Branch has the highest turnout of members at National Conference in 1998, and is responsible for some of the more contentious or 'critical' remits. For the National President, this confirms previous patterns of ordering he expects of Canterbury players. His inclination is to read into their actions that which he believes, while omitting to see that for which he has no beliefs (Weick, 1995:87). Put another way, he believes that the Canterbury players will be troublesome, and this expectation is likely to affect the information that he selects for processing, the inferences that he makes from their actions, and the information that he retains (Weick, 1995:148). Hence, branch *reputations* represent ordering strategies on the part of other players to see clarity in the actions of individual branch members, as well as to purport to understand the collective interests of 'the branch'.

However, the reputation of the Canterbury Branch is reworked at Conference, illustrating how *reputations* are continually in a state of flux. It seems the actions of the Canterbury delegates effect a shift in the Branch's reputation – at least for the time being. The main delegate, in particular, successfully plays out his *formal* role by adhering to the rhetoric of "those lifting the lids of beehives", rather than deploying the ordering strategies of the

Canterbury wasps. In this way, the National President is able to discern a distinction between the interests of players composing the Canterbury Branch. At crucial moments in the proceedings, the Canterbury delegate appeals to 'common sense' which appears to equate with the National President's own 'common sense'. The delegate's actions stand out because they do not conform to the President's expectations of the ways the delegate would be presenting the Canterbury Branch's 'critical' remits. Thus, the situation occasions 'sensemaking' on the part of the National President trying to make sense of what he has noticed (Weick, 1995:86).

## BRANCH MEETINGS

Canterbury Branch meetings are characterised by the same players consistently turning up, and in many ways function like an extended family. The players engage in friendly rivalry and taunt each other in relation to *local* knowledge and assertions of craft skill by individual players. This is a crucial way they go about ordering themselves and their work in *regional* settings. Those adhering to the rhetoric of "those who lift the lids of beehives" play out what this means in relation to keeping bees in Canterbury. These players negotiate their skills and competencies as beekeepers vis-à-vis each other and packers and Executive players present who also seek to enforce their interests and develop their skills. In particular, beekeepers like to use supper sessions following the more 'formal' proceedings to gather in groups and chat about their craft.

Canterbury players have established a pattern of formulating remits for presentation at National Conference in a May meeting, and then considering and voting on these remits in June. In July, there is usually some sort of post-Conference debriefing for the benefit of players who did not attend National Conference. This sense of 'structure' is important for players because,

The structure of meetings and an established calendar of decision points does not merely serve politics in this view, it becomes politics, and by its very structure can serve to coordinate and meld differences (Huff, 1988:88, cited in Weick, 1995:144).

Accordingly, the players treat 'branch' business very seriously and they bring to their monthly meetings briefcases, diaries, prepared notes, selected editions of the *New Zealand Beekeeper*, and clipboards and paper to write on. This is especially noticeable with regard to the wasps. The players also dress smartly, and for beekeepers this is in marked contrast to their usual attires 'doing the bees'.

The monthly meetings are arranged to commence at 7.30pm; although they often begin late as Canterbury players are known to find themselves locked out of the clubrooms where they conduct their meetings. Such contingencies, nevertheless, provide opportunities to engage in pre-meeting sessions in which they informally exchange, contest, and create *local* knowledge. In June, for example, players who arrive on time discover the building locked, and they gather outside in groups negotiating topical issues and concerns in beekeeping, such as the impact of genetically modified organisms on bees and honey. When the Ashburton 'cavalry' arrives there is comment from a former Ashburton beekeeper and now wasp that group members will have been working out their tactics and lines of attack on the trip up. The group have car pooled, and he knows how they operate through knowledge of past practice.

Once inside, the players arrange themselves in a discreet corner of the large open plan area in the clubrooms. They reposition tables and chairs to create an intimate and confined space; although this is not symmetrical and creates peripheral spaces. The President and Secretary of the Canterbury Branch sit at one side of the arrangement which is then interpreted as the 'head' by other players. The wasps position themselves directly opposite these *formal* position holders; and when the Executive members are present they prefer to sit near them. A group of beekeepers usually congregate together along one side of the seating arrangement. Less active players take seats towards the extremities to listen and observe other players without becoming engrossed in the goings on.

In other words, Canterbury Branch meetings are planned gatherings. The players have relatively fixed agendas and hold their meetings at pre-set

times and places. Notice of meetings and of their purpose customarily appear in the beekeeping journal, despite players being familiar with 'routine'. Particular players have pre-defined roles, such as the Branch President who acts as Chairperson, and the Branch Secretary who records the minutes. These players by and large seek to play out their formal responsibilities in consistent and predictable ways. The 'NBA rules' require particular players to assume these *formal* positions, and stipulate that minute books be maintained as 'official' records for the benefit of *national* players. Formal positions and official records aid players in ordering their interests and making their actions accountable to each other in regional settings, as well as to national position holders. They also create a sense of 'the organisation'. This is because players,

...need categorization devices or typifications to make sense of the stream of life carrying them forward. Above all, they need "membership categorization devices" – highly selective and interactionally variable mechanisms for "doing" *social* relations (Boden, 1994:57).

The current Chairman of the Canterbury Branch assumes a passive role in the remit meetings. He interjects on occasions to query the relevance of what certain players are saying to the remit being discussed, and where considerable time has already been expended thrashing out particular issues. The players take turns at speaking, and this is a product of their own ordering strategies pooling together, rather than any external constraints imposed by the Chairman. The Chairman simply monitors proceedings and occasionally asks questions to regulate discussions. This creates the illusion of 'order' where in fact there is none because,

(w)hat looks – from outside – like behavior controlled by rules and norms is actually a delicate and dynamic series of interactionally located adjustments to a *continual* unfolding and working out of "just what" is going on and being made to go on, which is to say, the organising of action (Weick, 1979:44-8, cited in Boden, 1994:42).

The wasps frequently go off on tangents and innovate as they go along, and this is consistent with their story-telling approach.

The 'NBA rules' prescribe an Annual Meeting and at least one other meeting of 'the branch' each year, but otherwise allow regional players to conduct their 'business' as they decide. This preserves and creates autonomy for locally-embedded players. Regional branches are officially recognised when a sufficient number of players in a designated geographical area intimate an intention to form a 'branch'. Thus, each branch composes a set of informal ties, tacit understandings, and mutually accepted ways of ordering the craft of beekeeping pre-existing between local players which have become formalised. These relations are remoulded in regional settings as *formal* organising activities to allow for the substitutability of different players over time.

Recurrent patterns in the ways Canterbury players are 'structuring' their encounters in branch meetings are rhetorical effects of implicit beliefs and assumptions of beekeeping in Canterbury (Law, 1994:107). Players draw on beliefs and assumptions of local conditions to recreate shared understandings over time to guide their actions. These understandings define and characterise how players get their work done in local environments relative to each other, and at once embody and reshape *formal* processes representing 'the Branch'. Thus, patterns can be seen as both a resource for and a product of interaction (Boden, 1994:11). Boden notes that, "so-called 'informal' processes are not some alternative normative rule-set, but...constitute 'business as usual'" (Boden, 1994:13).

## REMIT ONE: An Independent Editor

Two remits concerning the present Executive Secretary of the National Association are put forward by Canterbury wasps in the May branch meeting, and are subsequently voted upon by members in the June meeting. The remits illustrate ways in which marketing and business discourses being espoused by wasps cut across the rhetorical strategies of other players; reproducing the reputation of the Canterbury Branch as export focused and comprising players struggling to control national action in beekeeping. Both remits are ultimately lost in the national setting, and this reflects different interpretations and

perceptions of *formal* roles in beekeeping on the part of other configurations of local agents and materials. These configurations are likely to be defined by different power relations shaping the rhetorical devices of players and reflecting different sets of interests and capacities.

The first remit reads, *That this Conference recommends to the Executive that the current Editor of the New Zealand Beekeeper be removed and an independent editor be appointed.* The wasp proposing this remit ('Wasp 2') first appeals to 'official' fora in beekeeping as an initial strategy to secure legitimacy for the proposed remit in the eyes of 'beekeepers'. He advises of how the *Otago* Branch presented a remit at the Nelson Conference in 1997 which he interprets as being similar in intention. He also alludes to a thread of Letters to the Editor in the beekeeping journal depicting the points he wishes to make. The wasp is strategically placed to argue the remit through knowledge as a *packer* and member of the national Marketing sub-committee. He is also an active participant on the electronic-mail beekeeping distribution lists. The remit is an effect of this player's positioning in overlapping social and political networks. It also reveals the ways in which his interests are re-constituted in *regional* forums in light of local and craft knowledge possessed by 'beekeepers'.

With the assistance of a fellow wasp, Wasp 2 re-constructs prior events which in his experience illustrate why the *formal* positions of Executive Secretary and Editor should be fulfilled by different people. He begins by reading aloud a letter, posted on the 'NZBKprs' electronic-mail beekeeping distribution list, where an *Otago* wasp is relating his concerns about a conflict of interest between the *formal* positions. In the letter, the writer queries whether the Editor will publish correspondence received from members that is critical of the 'actions' or 'non-actions' of the Executive Secretary. He asks, "how does the Editor present a response from the Executive Secretary which will carry any credibility as far as the originating member is concerned?" The writer proceeds to describe a situation where it is alleged that the Editor has been staging 'personal' attacks on an NBA member, namely the list administrator, through the beekeeping journal. The formal player has been able to do this by purportedly allowing misrepresentative material to be



published questioning the list administrator's credibility through his knowledge as Executive Secretary.

The writer's concerns are perceived as 'legitimate', and his account is interpreted as a 'correct' rendition of circumstances, by the Canterbury wasp. Thus, a conflict of interest is taken as given, and the wasp sets out to rationalise this conclusion:

*Wasp 2:* I think that lays it out pretty clearly, um that there is a major problem there and at this moment I am aware that [the list administrator] took legal action and, um, may have presented the Executive with an ultimatum...

*Beekeeper 1:* Was [the list administrator] claiming that he had been defamed or something like that?

*Wasp 2:* Yeah.

*Wasp 1:* I actually sent in a letter to the Editor setting out the facts...and basically what happened was that the whole issue has arisen from the alleged [list administrator] charging \$400 a web page to run [the beekeeping homepage] for the Beekeepers' Association, but what happened was that [he] was providing that service free...

(Branch meeting, 26/05/98)

The first wasp also spells out the situation as he sees it, and his account illuminates a sequence of events giving rise to the present predicament. He relates, for instance, the spate of letters in the *New Zealand Beekeeper* culminating with an apology to the list administrator on the part of the Chairman of the National Publications Sub-committee. He rehashes circumstances leading to these letters to the Editor, explaining how he sought to rectify the course of events with a 'factual and evenly toned letter'. The wasp's letter is subsequently branded libellous by an Executive player present in the June branch meeting as a justification for not printing it in the journal. Wasp 1 and the list administrator are known to have allegiance to each other.

By acting in cohort the wasps bring forth a persuasive exposition of why the formal positions of Executive Secretary and Editor should be occupied by different people. Their stories are taken seriously by 'beekeepers':

*Beekeeper 2:* The last issue [of the *NZ Beekeeper*] that came out, though, there was an apology to readers over this incident.

*Wasp 2:* There are a number of issues I've got with that apology....I was actually incensed when I saw that um to the point where I believe they have done their best to further discredit [the list administrator] in their attempt to do it.

*Beekeeper 2:* The difficulty that we've got is I myself sort off aren't really involved heavily with the politics side of it, and the general, maybe I'm simpler, I don't know, *but the general beekeepers around probably don't understand the finer details of what's being going on.* They can see there's been a bit of a conflict there, you know, the finer details of it we don't really understand too much of it. And I accept the apology and that everything's closed....(T)his whole thing will die away will it not?

*Wasp two:* No, I don't think it will. The issue of the *Beekeeper* is the *snowflake on top of the iceberg.* It represents the typical and topical seized by the Executive Secretary. Here's a case where his conflict of interest has got him in trouble. Change the names, change the events, the same thing will happen again....He is Executive Secretary. He is also the person who is the Editor who is controlling the information that is going into the media about the Executive.

(Branch meeting, 26/05/98)

Wasp 2 proceeds to tell of other ways he sees the current Executive Secretary mismanaging his joint capacities. For example, he critiques the player's minute taking abilities at National Conference and during conference calls of the National Marketing Sub-committee. It is concluded,

*Beekeeper 2:* We've got a problem alright.

*Wasp two:* We've got a major problem....I am telling you all these details are the hint of an infrastructure that is broken.

*Beekeeper 2:* ...it's a tragedy this whole thing...

(Branch meeting, 26/05/98)

In the June branch meeting, Wasp 2 has a further opportunity to speak to the Executive Secretary's role in sub-committee contexts. In this meeting, remits devised by other NBA branches are also discussed and voted upon by the Canterbury members. It transpires that a remit has been proposed by *Otago* players stipulating that the "Executive Secretary cannot hold any other office or position in the National Beekeepers' Association". While the meaning

of this remit is ambivalent for some players, the wasp is unwavering in his interpretation. He makes sense of the *Otago* remit by rigorously interpreting the particular words used in such a way as to pull out the meanings and intentions he wants to see (Weick, 1995:15). He is assisted in doing this by his fellow wasp:

*Wasp 2:* To me this is clearly worded, clearly saying we don't want him to be on any other position other than Executive Secretary and what was spelt out there [in the rules]. The key issue there is the meetings, keeping minutes of meetings. It doesn't specify which meetings, but somebody has said...that they think it is Executive meetings. If it is Executive meetings then it would be quite clear that it is not referring in the rules to keeping minutes of subcommittee meetings.

*Wasp 1:* It is actually probably a key thing because... (he is interrupted)

*Wasp 2:* I mean...I am just trying to spell out here what this remit is actually trying to say, or what it does say.

*Wasp 1:* It has a flow on effect for you [beekeepers] because [the Executive Secretary's] hours directly relate to how you pay as a levy on administration...

(Branch meeting, 30/06/98)

Beekeepers respond by interpreting the remit in terms of what has already been worked out in the May meeting, namely, that the problem is a conflict of interest between the *formal* positions of Secretary and Editor. They are less likely to have participated on national sub-committees and these fora are less visible to them:

*Wasp 2:* Well maybe this is saying, hey he's useless let's get somebody else.

*Beekeeper 2:* No it's not. It's going back to the Editorial of the Journal.

*Beekeeper 1:* That's what it is referring to.

*Wasp 2:* Do you really think so?

*Beekeeper 2:* If you look at the other remits, this is what they are referring to.

*Wasp 2:* Where does it say that?

*Beekeeper 2:* It doesn't, but you (he is interrupted)

*Wasp 2:* Okay, if its not *said* then its not in the remit.

*Beekeepers:* It is an inference.

*Wasp 2:* No! Its not. It is very specific.

*Executive player 1:* I don't, its not specific at all. (He is interrupted).

*Wasp 2:* Where – what ambivalence?

(Branch meeting, 30/06/98)

By articulating his concerns in face-to-face meetings, the wasp improves his own understanding of the situation by receiving feedback from other players. He uses this information selectively to bolster his argument. Being able to describe a situation that is unusual in his experience allows him to “integrate that which is known about an event with that which is conjectural” and to “talk about absent things [in such a way as] to connect them with present things in the interest of meaning” (Weick, 1995:129). When the beekeepers perceive a problem, this reinforces his hunches of a conflict of interest. The players then proceed “as if they had some sense of what was up” (Weick, 1995:133). Law aptly conveys how stories are part of ordering:

(A)s we create and recreate our stories we make and remake both the facts of which they tell, and ourselves....And as they circulate they tell us at least as much about day-to-day ordering struggles as they do about ‘real’ history (Law, 1994:52).

When the Executive players counteract the wasp, one suggests that any conflict of interest between the formal positions can be alleviated simply by developing of a set of editorial rules. This player happens to be on the National Publication's Sub-committee, and he advises the Chair that a set of rules are currently being worked on. He is upholding the ability of written ‘rules’ to anticipate and rectify issues that arise in practice. For Law, this “tells of and generates the perfectly well-regulated organisation” and of people playing allotted roles (1994:77). The wasp responds by questioning the effectiveness of ‘rules’ in this context:

*Executive player 2:* If there had been a set of rules, the...[item] would not have been printed, and that's what it comes down to.

*Wasp 2:* I think the point in this discussion is that...even if you have got a set of rules – that's assuming that the rules are a good set of rules and cover every possible eventuality...[and] secondly that they are actually going to be enforced, that...you know, somebody is going to obey them – what this says is that the official channel for communication...is through the Secretary and if he

is the Editor and a problem arises from the actions of the Editor, then the same person is criticising each other.

(Branch meeting, 30/06/98)

It can be seen that Executive players present at Canterbury Branch meetings defend *formal* processes and the current Executive Secretary. In the case of alleged inaccuracies in the minutes of sub-committee meetings, they impute blame to committee members themselves, including the Canterbury wasp, who it is claimed have opportunities to review the minutes before they go to press. The Executive players are in positions to project *official* representations of events into the regional setting, and to put the criticisms espoused by wasps into perspective:

*Executive player 1:* What after all is it that we are dealing with? An individual who on this particular occasion is unable to defend himself. He is our Secretary sitting behind his desk in Napier. He is not the Pope, the Prime Minister, or the President of the United States. His contract ends in twelve months time. We institute something here which might in the second, third, fourth or fifth year, inhibit the Association...

(Branch meeting, 30/06/98)

The remit, nevertheless, receives majority support from Canterbury Branch players and is subsequently presented by the delegate at National Conference.

The timing of the presentation of the Canterbury Branch remit in the national setting relative to other 'contentious' remits proves crucial and precipitates its demise. It is immediately moved to 'lie upon the table' by two North Island branch delegates; although the National President rejects their motion and opens the remit for discussion. A member of the national marketing committee has earlier advised of his intentions with regard to 'contentious' remits, and it appears the delegates are following his example:

*Marketing member:* Mr Chairman, we have already had three remits which have been read by many people as being critical. I'm not certain what they are being critical of....*I'm not particularly interested in finding out. I do **not** believe that these sorts of things should be discussed at a Conference. I don't think it's right!* What I suggest is that these remits...lay upon the table until the next annual

general meeting....This type of thing does not make for a happy Conference. It does not make for a constructive Conference. It...is achieving no useful purpose. If the remits lay upon the table, you can look at it if you like as a threat – that the Executive must sort the situation out (National Conference, 22/07/98).

This player is treating 'critical' remits as signals of a 'weak organizational culture' (Weick, 1995:186). His inclination is to dismiss turbulence and conflict as negative phenomena and to remove all visible signs backstage, preserving National Conference as a 'performance' for the benefit of 'the membership' and 'outside' players present. He is perhaps overlooking the value of face-to-face encounters resolving issues through providing different information and multiple cue for players to make sense of each other and present circumstances. Nevertheless, the arrival of such a remit at Conference infringes his sense of the national field and what is supposedly at stake.

When the National President responds to the speech, he makes his 'personal' stance-point known. This provokes accusations from players, such as the list administrator, as immediate past President, and also from the wasp who instigated the Canterbury remit. The National President has a different notion of what the national setting is all about. As a formal position holder he wants an indication of what other players make of the Canterbury remit. However, his adversaries question the legitimacy of what the National President has said by virtue of his *formal* position.

*National President:* Now personally, I would like to see this sort of rubbish dealt with and got rid of – to clear the air. And that's my personal opinion. What you are going to have is the opportunity to make that choice.

*Marketing member:* Mr Chairman, I'm giving you the opportunity to sort it out for us! Its up to **you** to sort it out for **us**. Not us. You're putting **us** in a very awkward position. Well that's how I feel...**extremely** awkward position.

*National President:* I suggest that those who moved to put this on the audit paper put us in a very difficult position.

*Canterbury wasp:* Why did they put them on the audit paper? Why did they put them on the audit paper?

*List administrator:* Because there is something wrong?

(National Conference, 22/07/98)

The Canterbury Branch delegate afterwards vents his frustration with what is happening and proposes what he sees as a solution:

*Canterbury Branch delegate:* Mr President, in view of the feeling on the meeting, which I concur with, and that is – I don't think we're achieving very much...(he signs) ...with what's happening here. I would ask someone to move the formal motion that the motion be put. Vote on the thing, get rid of it, and get onto the next remit which might be a good one (National Conference, 22/07/98).

While the delegate's actions demonstrate his allegiance with players "lifting the lids of beehives", the National President reiterates his resolve that there be 'full discussion'. He postulates that "it would be better to have a positive decision on this, to have some discussion". Thus, he trying to promote the value of Conference providing transparency of players' positions and making known their respective game strategies. He may realise that it is "relatively difficult...put[ting] on dissimulating performance[s]" in heated face-to-face encounters (Law, 1994:182).

A number of delegates intimate on behalf of their branch members that they are against the Canterbury remit. It later transpires that there is confusion on the part of certain players as to which remit is being spoken to. The *Otago* remit had been presented immediately prior to the Canterbury remit and successfully laid upon the table without further discussion. The *Otago* Branch's delegate now advises 'the meeting' that "our remit was actually referring to the same thing...", that in fact there could be a conflict between being both the Editor and the Executive Secretary at the same time" (National Conference, 22/07/98):

*Hawkes Bay delegate:* Um, I'm going to speak against the remit. I can see no reason why you have to have a – completely immaterial of how good or how bad the Editor is – there's no reason why it should be separate from the function, and lots of good reasons why it should be together as far as I can see.

*Hawkes Bay co-delegate:* You are on the wrong remit.

*Hawkes Bay delegate:* No I'm not.

*North Otago delegate:* Could you tell me what motion we are speaking to, Mr Chairman?

*Hawkes Bay delegate:* Point of clarification, Mr Chairman, if I may. When I spoke a minute ago I read this remit to read, I took the understanding of the remit to mean that we should have an editor separate from the Executive Secretary. That is the way that I read this remit, and um I see other people are reading it differently.

(National Conference, 22/07/98)

When the National President eventually intimates his intention to put the remit to vote, he enquires whether there are any objections. The list administrator replies that 'as one member I object to that', and moves a procedural motion "that we proceed to the next business". He presumably wants the remit to lie upon the table as a gesture to 'the Executive', and especially to the National President, that it is their responsibility. When there are discussions amongst players as to what is happening, the list administrator compels adherence to 'procedure'. He impresses to players that because a procedural motion has been moved and seconded "we're not supposed to be debating it". The National President, nevertheless, puts the motion. He believes he has the concurrence of 'the meeting', but the wasp is determined to defy him:

*List administrator:* Objection! I move an objection to the rule. Sorry, you have accepted my motion, my procedural motion, you must deal with it before you proceed with the motion.

*National President:* I said at the beginning of my speech that I did not want it to develop into this sort of, I believe in the *interests of the beekeepers* that we should proceed with this motion. I am not sure whether I have the right to the choice of accepting your motion or not, but I have also read that it is wise to make a decision and go with it if you are right or wrong. I am not dilly, dallying around all day. I am ruling that we put this motion.

(National Conference, 22/07/98)

The list administrator enquires how this is going to be recorded in the minutes, and a North Island delegate (and newly elected Executive player) suggests adjourning the meeting while he goes and fetches the rule book. This is the first of many occasions where recourse to the rule book is deemed necessary by particular players; although on this occasion a life member resolves the matter by informing 'the meeting' that the motion should lapse.



The National President is subsequently able to put the remit to the vote. It is defeated, signalling *regional* consensus and, for some players, the triumph of 'common sense'.

## REMIT TWO: Performing *formal* roles

The second remit instigated by a Canterbury wasp in the Canterbury Branch's May meeting reads, *That this Conference recommends to Executive that a full review of the performance of the Executive Secretary be undertaken by an independent party.* The wasp ('Wasp 1') is a previous Executive player and honey producer, and presently occupies different capacities as a marketer. Nonetheless, he demonstrates that he identifies as an 'ordinary' member by aligning himself with beekeepers. He appears genuinely alarmed about the ways in which the current Executive Secretary is playing out 'official' responsibilities he associates with the *formal* role. For instance, he recounts how three pieces of correspondence he has posted to the Executive Secretary's office have been lost. It transpires in discussions that correspondence from certain other Canterbury Branch members, including the other wasp, have also 'disappeared':

*Wasp 1: ...I've had three pieces of correspondence in the last twelve months which I've sent myself which have been lost by that outfit. You know, you send your, I send mail all over the place and this is the only thing that has ever got lost. There has been another from Ashburton where um a beekeeper down there sent through his um levy...wrote out the wool cheque and sent it off, and didn't hear anything until last weekend when he received a letter from the solicitors from the Executive for debt collecting (Branch meeting, 26/05/98).*

The wasp is particularly perturbed by ties of friendship and trust existing between the Executive Secretary and the current National President. He sees these informal ties transforming the formal roles in negative ways. For instance, he notes that scheduled reviews of the Executive Secretary's contract do not appear to have taken place or to have produced the 'results' he deems necessary. To account for this, he espouses conspiracy theories provoked by the informal processes which enable players to detect some logic

and clarity in past circumstances. The wasp is also attributing imperfect reasoning and dubious motivations to existing Executive players which may only be apparent in retrospect (Weick, 1995:28).

*Beekeeper 2:* So what's your remit?

*Wasp 1:* Well...I felt that the review committee is clouded by – lets not upset the apple cart, we've got this guy we can sort of make it work....(I)t is quite an ordeal to change the Executive Secretary, but...I think they're entertaining a fool basically. That is the problem.

...

*Wasp 1:* Where I see it the biggest problem...is that your current Executive thinks its okay because they'll all part of the plot. Now when, if they decide to dump [the Executive Secretary] who are they going to pick? They'll be going for something that will be part of the plot. The Executive Secretary needs to be picked by an *independent* group of people.

(Branch meeting, 26/05/98)

It appears that the wasp is underestimating positive consequences arising out of informal processes, such as, the capacity to furnish support to role occupants struggling in their roles (Dalton, 1959:256). This is because informal processes can “work for many ends: to change and preserve the [Association], to protect weak individuals, punish erring ones, reward others, to recruit new personnel, and to maintain the dignity of the formal, as well as, of course, to carry on power struggles” (Dalton, 1959:222).

While the wasp's account may be misleading and contested by the Executive players, it nevertheless allows for effective action. This is because “bold action...shapes that which is emerging” (Weick, 1995:60):

[Players] need to distort and filter, to separate signal from noise given their current projects, if they are not to be overwhelmed with data....[Those] who want to get into action tend to simplify rather than elaborate (Weick, 1995:57,60).

Hypotheses and expectations are born out as the Canterbury wasps “prefer a narrative mode of thought to one that is paradigmatic and more data driven” (Weick, 1995:153). Wasp 1, for example, has a fixed notion of the formal role

of Executive Secretary, and of responsibilities associated with performing this role. He has an idea of who he sees being able to 'perfect' the role, and this shapes his interpretation of its present performance. It also happens to introduce the informal processes he has previously denied. The wasp proceeds to tell of ways in which he views the current Executive Secretary as 'incompetent', and he is supported in his endeavours by Wasp 2. Their stories build on the representation of events as worked out in relation to remit one. Together, these players are constructing a credible version of events by rendering what *they* think is going on into something more tangible and candid (Weick, 1995:14):

*Wasp 2:* I mean, just as a personal note, I want to, I am on two committees and I receive a number of correspondence....and um at the end of the day the photocopying is what gets me because on the Export Certification Committee I was sent a copy of the draft plan...and I've subsequently had extra copies directly from [the Executive Secretary]. We're talking about a 30-40 page document here, and you know its like \$3-4 to bloody photocopy the thing and send it out to me, and I've had it twice. Now that's happening all the time...

*Wasp 1:* We received three copies of the beekeeper magazine – just in case I don't read the first one.

(Branch meeting, 26/05/98)

The wasps' allegations spark a series of questions from 'beekeepers' as to 'who this guy is'. For instance, they query the Executive Secretary's qualifications, and ask how he came to occupy the position.

*Beekeeper 2:* So this, I'm trying to get clear in my mind. This guy does that for a living and he doesn't put a quote in and he was elected for the job and he said how much he was going to charge?

*Wasp 1:* No, there's a contract. He puts the contract, it is basically by a tender process. He tenders a price so... (He is interrupted)

*Beekeeper 2:* He puts in a price and the Executive accepts it. Did anyone else have the opportunity... (He is interrupted)

*Wasp 1:* No we didn't call for tenders because they reviewed his position and he said yes and he had a new price because he said there was increased workload with the Commodity Levy thing coming up.

*Wasp 2:* His first price was like \$120000.

*Wasp 1:* Oh yeah, he just, he worked it, yeah.

...

*Beekeeper 2:* ...Does he have an office he's paying rent for or its not out of his backyard or in a caravan?

*Wasp 1:* No. We would be better if he did um (jokingly).

*Beekeeper 2:* How, how, have you been to his office?

*Wasp 1:* Yes – not the new one, but it is a good office.

*Beekeeper 2:* What's his general, what's his desk look like and his filing cabinets? You know. I'm interested to sort of get an idea of who this guy is.

*Wasp 1:* Well...it all seemed relatively tidy and, and *ordered*. But I tell you if you don't open the drawer you're not going to make a mess are you?

(Branch meeting, 26/05/98)

It is concluded by another beekeeper that an 'exact job description' for the Executive Secretary position needs to be formulated. He is promptly informed there is one already:

*Wasp 1:* That has been done. That has been done and is very... (He is interrupted)

*Beekeeper 1:* How did it get to such a cock up then?

*Wasp 2:* Because of the people who employed him?

*Beekeeper 4:* They, they said they were going to reduce industry costs and... they went out to cut secretarial costs and this is what you get when you out the costs.

*Wasp 1:* You pay peanuts, you get monkeys. But the problem is all the monkey's want cashew nuts!

(Branch meeting, 26/05/98)

Thus, the stories told by the wasps reshape ideas and assumptions of *formal* roles in beekeeping on the part of players, including themselves. What emerges from discussions are mutually reinforcing interpretations and shared understandings of the positions of Executive Secretary and Editor (Weick, 1995). The players negotiate responsibilities associated with the formal roles, and assert the significance of getting the 'right' people into the jobs. Discussions also serve to resurrect collective notions of what 'the organisation' is, or should be, all about:

*Beekeeper 1:* The executive secretary is really a key figure in the Industry, isn't he? He just does so much...

*Wasp 1:* Well it's the only paid position...

*Beekeeper 1:* ...He's got to be good.

(Branch meeting, 26/05/98)

Having established an 'ideal' representation of the Executive Secretary position, the wasps claim the list administrator as the 'best guy' for the job. They contend, however, that he 'won't get hired' because of 'a personal agenda to grind' on the part of certain Executive members. This is why the wasps wish to see an *independent* party reviewing the formal position:

*Wasp 1:* [The list administrator] put his name forward for the Executive Secretary position when the position was up for review last time. It was made quite clear that the current Executive, because they didn't like [the list administrator], that there wasn't going to be a dog show in hell that that guy was going to get the job even if he was the best person for the job....But there will come a time when you've got a different Executive in there, and this guy will be the best guy that there ever was.

...

*Wasp 2:* The other thing is face-to-face on a day to day basis he's [the Executive Secretary] a likeable guy.

*Wasp 1:* He's a nice guy!

*Beekeeper 5:* It has got nothing to do with it.

*Wasp 2:* It does when you are friendly with the guy...and you've actually employed the person and [have] been a major component of recommendation for that person.

*Wasp 1:* You're not going to throw him out in the desert.

*Wasp 2:* You've got a problem there. You have to remove the decision making process away from the President.

(Branch meeting, 26/05/98)

A debate subsequently ensues over whether or not an independent body can and should be brought in to adjudicate procedures in a 'democratic' organisation.

*Beekeeper 6:* We elect an Executive to make the decisions for the industry and that's democracy whether you like it or not, and you cannot get an independent group to select the Secretary for the Industry – in my view.

*Wasp 2:* But when we vote for the Executive do we actually vote them for their skills to hire and fire people?. What I am saying is maybe they should use a consultant to help them with the task?.

*Beekeeper 1:* Well I thought many jobs were done that way anyway. (There are exclamations of agreement) You want a man for a job you ring up a firm that will go through all your applicants and get the best man for the job.

(Branch meeting, 26/05/98)

This provokes reflexivity as to whether “the current system may have outlived its usefulness”:

*Wasp 1:* ...it may be time to have an Industry Council whereby we have representatives from the Queen Breeders, Comb Honey Producers and what have you sitting on a board and that's how it's run. And you have one paid President that sits there and resides over them all (Branch meeting, 26/05/98).

When the Executive players are present in the June branch meeting, they are able to furnish players with *official* figures relating to administrative and editorial costs associated with the Executive Secretary's contract. These players are in positions to dispute the wasps' allegations. For instance, they set out to counteract inferences that the Executive Secretary is primarily responsible for increased administration expenditure at the detriment of the Association's marketing activities. The Executive players and wasps forthwith engage in heated skirmishes, interpreting and reinterpreting figures and contesting 'truthful' renditions of previous events:

*Wasp 2:* Ah, the administration is a lot more in that total figure than you have indicated. Where's the lawyers fees?

*Executive player 1:* Oh yes, but...

*Wasp 2:* Where's the photocopying?

*Executive player 1:* That is as far as the *Secretary* is concerned.

*Wasp 1:* Yeah, we are not talking about *him* getting a percentage of the money as in 50%.

*Executive player 1:* You were.

*Wasp 2:* That may have been what you indicated, what [Executive player 2] started wagging his finger about, but... (He is interrupted)

*Executive player 1:* The reason why he was wagging his finger was because that is what you said.

*Wasp 2:* What I said is *administration*, and the major beneficiary of the administration is [the Executive Secretary].

*Executive player 1:* Well, it shows that he is *not* the major beneficiary.

*Wasp 2:* Well maybe we should look at some of the other costs.

*Executive player 1:* Oh blimy! I'm afraid I'm not going through our income"

*Wasp 1:* Well we've got that in our annual report....So lets have a look.

(Branch meeting, 30/06/98)

At the June branch meeting, one of the wasps is also perturbed when a number of beekeepers intimate that they wish cast their votes in relation to the remit in person at Conference. These players presumably want to 'feel out' the national meeting and to gauge the interpretations of other players concerning the performance of the Executive Secretary before deciding how to vote. The wasp is worried that this will mean the beekeepers cannot exercise their votes unless a poll vote happens to be called. This is because ordinary votes cast by branch delegates simply intimate whether 'the branch' as a whole is 'for' or 'against' a remit; rather than tallying individual votes. The wasp attempts to clarify this course of action according to 'the NBA rules', and demonstrates superior knowledge of voting procedures in the national forum. An Executive player reprimands him for doing so:

*Wasp 1:* If you leave the vote with the delegate, the delegate has got the discretion to use the votes at the Conference after discussion. Far better option than if you were to go with carrying your own vote because unless you call a poll vote on every remit, you are not going to get your voice aired at Conference...your vote is powerless....I think...there is a wee bit of a lack of understanding here....So I just wonder whether we have in fact voted correctly.

*Executive member 1:* No. That's their option. That's not for you to tell them.

(Branch meeting, 30/06/98)

When the Canterbury Branch delegate is called to speak to the Branch's remit at National Conference, he tries to downplay it's intent in light of the 'feeling' of 'the (national) meeting'. He makes a joke and this momentarily feeds and detracts from the immediate source of contention. By playing on

the Branch's reputation, he reinforces a competitive rivalry between North Island and South Island beekeepers, and emphasises regional variability:

*Canterbury Branch delegate:* (Stands and addresses the meeting) Now the Canterbury Branch has always carried a wide cross-section of beekeeping opinion concerning both practice and political philosophy... (The President intervenes)

*National President:* Do we have a seconder?

*Hawkes Bay delegate:* Have we moved a remit? (This prompts widespread discussion, followed by laughter.)

*National President:* We have had it moved. Have we a seconder for the motion?

*Canterbury Branch delegate:* Well actually the first remit I've got here is that Conference recommends to the Executive that the Auckland Branch must continue to send the best rugby players to Canterbury forever... (laughter)...but, however, my script writer must have, right remit three.

(National Conference, 22/07/98)

The delegate proceeds to introduce the remit after the National President reiterates 'correct' procedure for presenting remits. His tone of voice becomes serious until he purports to lose his way. The President, delighted by this apparent mistake, advises the delegate that "its on the top of the page".

This Canterbury remit, nevertheless, also flares frustration on the part of a cross-section of players. It is actually the first of the 'critical' remits presented at Conference, and provokes players into reflexively thinking and talking 'the organisation' (Boden, 1994). The ways in which players react to the remit reveal the close association between the national field and 'the organisation' itself in the minds of players. The Canterbury remit appears to polarise positions and, therefore, incites conflict: Questions are fired from the floor as to the meaning of Conference and the purposes of branch remits. In response, some players struggle to "momentarily feed [the conflict] as they inventively channel it to preserve the organization" (Dalton, 1959:264). Others dogmatically cling to what they see as 'rules' governing their relations. These latter players consider that to find 'the rules' is to locate 'the organisation', and this is how they seek to 'order' past and future activities in constituting present relations in the national field (Boden, 1994:154).



The Otago Branch delegate, for instance, queries whether the Canterbury players have acted reasonably by attempting to resolve the matter directly with the Executive Secretary before presenting the remit at Conference. This player upholds the validity of *formal* mechanisms already in place, purportedly allowing for “two way, free and frank discussion” of the Executive Secretary’s contract and for concerns and complaints to be tabled at forthcoming *Executive* meetings. The Canterbury delegate responds by admitting he is ‘not totally conversant’ with the circumstances giving rise to the remit. This obliges the Canterbury wasps to stand before players in the national setting to present their (individual) cases and to assert the reasonableness of their actions. Those players clinging to *formal* processes have a “pervasive sense of idealized bureaucratic rationality” which shapes their understandings of the national field, how they respond to the actions of others, and, more importantly, the accounts they provide (Boden, 1994:183). This sense of ‘bureaucratic rationality’ is also a consequence of their present ‘informal’ positions in beekeeping.

The Canterbury wasp who initiated the remit subsequently compels adherence to ‘proper’ procedure in order to impress a point strongly to other players. He calls for a show of hands in order to determine how many players have had mail lost that was sent to the Executive Secretary’s office. The National President tries unsuccessfully to forestall this action, although is able to turn the situation to his advantage:

*National President:* You’ve already got the answer. You know what the answer is.

*Canterbury wasp:* I don’t think I have.

*National President:* Are you finished?

*Canterbury wasp:* No.

*National President:* The answer is three!

*Canterbury wasp:* Only three?

(The President reluctantly asks for a show of hands, making sure his request is heard, and counts the number of hands)

*National President:* Eight. It doesn’t seem like you’re being singled out.

*Canterbury wasp:* Something does not look good.

*National President:* If we don't receive it, how can we actually record it?....You'll have to go to your post-office.

(National Conference, 22/07/98)

A North Island branch delegate consequently apportions blame to New Zealand Post, telling of an unrelated situation where she has not yet received mail from her post-office. This seals the fate of the Canterbury remit which is put to the vote and lost.

The above discussions on the two Canterbury Branch remits critical of the present Executive Secretary and, by implication, of other formal position holders, reveal the state of power relations characterising the regional field. The remits are a product of intersecting rhetorical devices of sets of players in branch meetings, and epitomise their attempts to create and bestow order in their relations at particular points in time. Consideration of the Canterbury remits at National Conference, though, challenges conceptions these players and others have of both the regional setting and the national field. The discussions provoke a range of players into re-evaluating their own conduct and that of others in the fields. In other words, the Canterbury Branch remits prompt particular players into pursuing strategies in the national field aimed at reaffirming tacit understandings of what is at stake. These strategies enforce 'a front of objectivity' which equips the players with a "recognized ability to tell the truth about the state of the debate" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:258, 256). Consequently, the fate of the Canterbury Branch remits at National Conference unravels the ordering attempts of the Canterbury players, especially wasps', as embodied and expressed through the remits.

### REMIT THREE: *Commodity Levies*

A remit concerning commodity levies payable to the National Association is activated in the May Canterbury Branch meeting by the beekeeper subsequently elected as branch delegate ('Beekeeper 1'). The beekeeper is frustrated with the current method for determining levies as it appears 'no where near equitable' from his point of view as a commercial honey producer in Mid Canterbury. He suggests to fellow members that for

“an organisation that has a *compulsory* levy...it has to maintain fair-play among *all* of its members”. Thus, he proposes that levies be calculated on the number of apiaries *and* the number of *hives* owned by beekeepers to make the system fairer. The previous method had been based only on the number of hives:

*Beekeeper 1*: I haven't gone to the trouble of writing mine out but, um, I'm just wondering whether it is worth the Canterbury Branch sending one in....I mean why, what I'm asking is why wasn't um the combination idea considered in the first place?...You see my concern is that we in Canterbury, and we're probably the only area disadvantaged, um most beekeepers run fairly large yards, you know, 20s are quite common through most of New Zealand, but we in Canterbury run 10 or a dozen.

*Wasp 1*: The average hive holding in New Zealand is 14.

*Beekeeper 2*: We are disadvantaged in Mid-Canterbury, Canterbury, but we do have a higher crop average than most areas in New Zealand too.

*Wasp 1*: The reality of it is that every second yard could be combined together. You know, that's what we could do. But what the levy in effect does is make you do something you wouldn't want to do. So...there is an option for you to change to lessen your levy, but in *Mid-Canterbury* if you take out half of your apiaries you're find they'll soon fill up with someone prepared to pay the levy. And that is, that's why we seem to hold a piece of turf so to speak.

(Branch meeting, 26/05/98)

Canterbury beekeepers purport to know of beekeepers with similar hive numbers in other regions who have enjoyed considerable decreases in their levies. They also believe some of these players are accruing extra benefits, such as, greater voting rights. The disparity is attributed to fewer hives per apiary being kept by beekeepers in Canterbury relative to beekeepers in other *regions*. Yet, the ways in which beekeepers manage their apiaries are shaped by *local* conditions and *local* knowledge. The issue provokes the Canterbury beekeepers into articulating and comparing practices deployed in the fields 'doing the bees' in response to increased levies. They also tell stories of beekeepers in other regions. Their strategies of improvisation in the fields are both legitimated and refined through fresh information and ideas generated in social interaction:

*Beekeeper 1:* Yes I can understand all that, but in the field the issue is a bit simpler than that. For example, [name of beekeeper] runs roughly the same number of hives as I do, but he runs yards of at least 20 – all through the borage country about 24, even 30. So he pays effectively half the levy. Now the average of two of us may be 14, but he's paying half the levy that I'm paying. So there is quite a bit of inequality there.

*Wasp 1:* ...if you want to you can put all your bees on one site for the winter and pay 50 bucks.

*Beekeeper 7:* That's what I've done.

*Wasp 1:* But you have to de-register all your other ones...

*Beekeeper 7:* Hold on, hold on. I'm an honest kiwi. I can do that dead easy. I've got all my hives on ten apiaries, but I pay for 130 apiaries...

*Beekeeper 1:* The point is you don't have to.

*Beekeeper 7:* Well yes you do because then I've got that hound out there who thinks he's gonna flog it.

*Wasp 2:* How does he know you've got it de-registered? That's an agreement between you and the land owner.

*Beekeeper 1:* No one else knows.

*Wasp 1:* MAF doesn't give the information out to, over to me and say that [X] has de-registered those apiaries and you'd better move quick because you'll miss out.

*Wasp 2:* Your tenure on that land is at the whim of the land owner, whether it is MAF registered or not has nothing to do with it.

*Beekeeper 7:* Well at least I've got a, my conscience is clear. And I've paid for that site...

(Branch meeting, 26/05/98)

Deliberations on the levy remit, thus, embody branch players enacting their ordering strategies through talk (Boden, 1994:18). The players are exchanging and contesting each other's knowledge in ways which reflect their different positions in beekeeping and the co-operative links they have with others that are necessary to perform their work. This is how *local* knowledge is filtered, juxtaposed, and reconstituted as *regional* knowledge in relation to perceived regional variability in beekeeping. Tacit understandings of local craft practices are at once challenged and reinforced:

*Beekeeper 8:* Where I find a problem is the date of the ah June 1<sup>st</sup>. Take the situation I was in last year where I shifted hives up to the honeydew at the end

of summer. I didn't de-register the sites because um, you know, I had every intention of using them again next year. Then through completely different reasons I wound up selling them - or selling some...If they gave you say a December date or something like that, I think it would be a lot more realistic. We know whether we're using them for the season or not....

*Beekeeper 6:* But if you are aware of it, you know that in advance you're got some hives up for sale, you'd de-register them as quickly as you possibly could.

*Wasp 1:* And that you hope like hell that nobody catches you out. (Someone says, 'exactly'.)

*Beekeeper 8:* Well all I'm saying is that the date is wrong...

*Beekeeper 4:* Yeah, but 90% of the other beekeepers in New Zealand, the reason why June was selected was the best time of year when there was less number of hives being moved around the countryside...

*Wasp 1:* They're all home. They're not all out on pollination sites.

*Beekeeper 4:* That's why the 31 December was thrown out because everyone was in the process of moving out of orchards moving into honey crops.

*Wasp 1:* And the kiwifruit orchards, the pollination people got an advantage once again.

*Beekeeper 2:* Yes I can see the problem. I was thinking in December there's pretty well a separate crop one way or the other.

*Beekeeper 4:* Only in the honey producing areas...

(Branch meeting, 26/05/98)

One of the Canterbury wasps happens to have been instrumental in bringing about the 'new' system for calculating levies. As an Executive player at the time, he rehashes reasons for change with the benefit of hindsight knowledge. This involves reconstructing events precipitating the decision to change by drawing on post-decision eventualities (Weick, 1995:12). The wasp accentuates what he sees as *positive* features of the new system and *negative* features of the previous system. He accomplishes this through drawing on selective aspects of the past to justify present circumstances and provide a credible version of events that will look sensible in the future (Boden, 1994:57-8). In this way, he is "retrospectively alter[ing] the meaning of the decision, the nature of the alternatives, and the 'history' of the decision" (Weick, 1995:11). It is argued, therefore, that the wasps "discover their own inventions" through interaction with different sets of players in regional settings (Weick, 1995:15). For these players, 'reality' becomes an "on-going

accomplishment that takes form when [they] make retrospective sense of the situations in which they find themselves and their creations (ibid.).

In the June branch meeting wasp one also describes how earlier actions set in motion events precluding consideration of alternative courses of action:

*Wasp 1: The problem arose that half way through it we started collecting up the money...and okay there were arguments and what have you, but at the end of the day we collected the money....But the wheels had already got going that this thing was going to go and, you know, you couldn't - even if you did knock off the wheels - you couldn't stop it because we had decided to go up this road (Branch meeting, 30/06/98).*

He is alluding to a situation where it seems easier to change beliefs about actions, rather than to change the actions themselves. Put another way, the wasp is perceiving 'structural' constraints acting externally and guiding unilaterally his actions and the actions of other players. This is how he attempts to deflect responsibility from himself and fellow formal position holders at the time in order to preserve his reputation as a co-ordinator of national strategies. His fellow wasp makes a similar point in the May meeting when he describes a condition where it is presumed that 'the action' is taking place elsewhere and cannot readily be discerned or dealt with (Law, 1994:46):

*Wasp 2: The truth of the history of the situation is...that if people didn't pay their levies seemed to be the major claim of contention. Whether in fact that was the case or not, whether there were other means that didn't really get exercised....[fellow wasp] explored these. At about the time they started talking about changing the levy, they began taking legal proceedings against a number of people, and they started getting payments out of those people which meant that the original system wasn't all that bad. But by then the decisions about the change had already been made fairly well, and they weren't sort of looking at what was currently happening at the time...(Branch meeting, 26/05/98).*

Thus, the wasps are enacting a situation in which beliefs are being selectively mobilised to justify a negative outcome. The "beliefs make sense of the irrevocable action and the circumstance within which it was generated, even if

all of this was only vaguely clear when the action itself became irrevocable” (Weick, 1995:156).

The first wasp later suggests that issues being mooted by the Canterbury players are “problems that only raise themselves when the new system is implemented”. He also proposes a *formal* review of the apiary levy system:

*Wasp 1:* The bit that got my nose was there was a statement made when the Executive was here, if there's anything wrong, tell us and we'll fix it. So you tell them something's wrong and they tell you...[to] fix it...as if it was all my fault. I designed the boat okay, I didn't realise there was a bit of a hole in the back corner, but it doesn't mean we've all got to sink to the bottom of the ocean.

*Beekeeper 2:* I myself feel that the present levy needs to be left as it is to shape down and let the bugs come to the surface. Really, you know, there's probably more...

*Wasp 2:* This is the anomaly – changing the course may not be the best to fix it, maybe wait.

*Beekeeper 2:* ...people will adapt. They'll adapt to it.

(Branch meeting, 26/05/98)

The wasp believes that satisfactory alternatives to the present system are limited, and he questions what would be a ‘fair’ system:

*Wasp 1:* What would be a fair levy?...We worked...through every possible thing we could come up with....So yes, it has changed the levy base, and I think it will actually take the Industry five years to actually accept that none of them are absolutely fair....And when you talk about fairness, we are just moving into a period where the levy is presumed to pay for the PMS as well. The more apiaries you have, the more difficult, the more costly the PMS.

(Branch meeting, 26/05/98)

He happens to be supported in this view by an Executive member in attendance at the June branch meeting. The Executive player argues that the levy system is the “only one we have got...[and] there is no levy system that has ever been designed that is foul-proof, accurate or fair”. He is maintaining the integrity of *formal* processes, and exclaims,

*Executive player 1:* As far as the NBA is concerned there is only one revenue channel and that is by levy. And that is probably the poorest conceivable way of gathering revenue you could ever conceive of, but there appears to be no alternative....(A)s far as this industry is concerned those opportunities don't exist...and we've got to depend on the levy system with all its faults and with all the ways it can be manipulated... (Branch meeting, 30/06/98).

The second Executive player present in the June Branch meeting queries the performance of Executive members *at the time* the new levy system was being devised. A debate ensues as to who can be called to account, and the wasp is obliged to further explicate his actions and those of his peers. He quickly appeals to *formal* processes put in place and followed at the time to muster legitimacy for his actions:

*Beekeeper 9:* We've been lumped to pay all this extra....You know, its ludicrous. We're being sucked! There we are.

*Executive member 2:* It's not a matter of being sucked.

*Beekeeper 9:* I think it is.

*Executive member 2:* The people who worked on the commodity levy actually didn't do their figures properly. They worked it out...on 14.25 hives per apiary site....They just took an average.

*Beekeeper 10:* Yeah, but the largest beekeepers in the country didn't turn around and say this going to disadvantage a lot of *you* people. We are going to be paying a hell of a lot less, and we're going to be getting one hell of a lot more votes for say in the Industry. Now don't tell me that that isn't a worse change.

*Executive member 2:* Who sat on this committee and um worked it out?

*Wasp 1:* I was one. I had a lot to loose....I run 12 hives an apiary, and I was losing all the way. But the problem was that there was no certain way of collecting monies on the hive levy method, and this was put up as a remit at Conference that we investigate that this idea be put forward....And we all had the chance to vote on it, and nobody cried it all down when it was in its implementation stages....(W)e actually had to present a vote which said, yes we are in agreement with it, the majority of our industry agrees that that was the thing to do.

(Branch meeting, 30/06/98)



However, the beekeepers question the validity of the formal referendum that was undertaken to ascertain their views on the proposed levy system. They contend that the previous system based on hive numbers was better.

The wasp's comments also spark disagreement among players as to whether actual hive numbers owned by beekeepers can be quantified. Arguments are perpetuated by a *private* feud between one of the Executive members and the second wasp. The former is a past employee of the latter, and has now assumed a *formal* position in beekeeping; hence, reworking the nature of their relations:

*Wasp 1:* The biggest problem with the hive was the fact that the industry was losing money....It was really getting a problem because you couldn't go out to a guy and say, hey, you have got 700 hives, there was no way of proving that. You can go out and prove you have got 700 apiaries...

*Executive member 2:* (Countering the wasp's assertion that you cannot determine hive numbers) You can.

*Beekeeper 9:* (Also responding to the wasp's assertion) No you can't. Its got worse. How many sites are unregistered around the country?

*Executive member 2:* You can go round and see his hives, count his hives.

*Wasp 2:* How do you prove that he has got, hasn't just shifted things?

*Executive member 2:* How do you prove he has got apiary sites?

*Wasp 2:* Because they're on the register.

*Beekeeper 9:* No they're not. There's a lot of unregistered sites around.

*Wasp 2:* You find hives on an apiary site and you look it up, and if its not on the MAF register at that point you have a defaulter.

*Executive member 2:* You can do the same with hives.

*Wasp 2:* No you can't!

*Executive member 2:* But you can!

(Branch meeting, 30/06/98)

Other players maintain that there will always be players who "think they are going to be hard done by" regardless of 'the system' in place:

*Beekeeper 1:* No matter what sort of system you have, at the end of the day what it comes down to is whether *beekeepers* feel they are getting value for money. Now in the car on the way through tonight, we were talking about what farmers pay under Federated Farmers. That levy is about 150 bucks basically.

Now we pay, many of us, four, five, six times more than that, and are we getting value for money for that?

*Beekeeper 9:* I've got to pay another 500 bucks. What can I get for that extra 500 bucks?

...

*Beekeeper 6:* At the end of the day as long as you're quite happy with what it is costing you for your input into the running of the Association.

*Beekeeper 7:* I'm not happy, but I mean...

*Beekeeper 2:* It's a necessary evil.

*Beekeeper 7:* Yeah.

(Branch meeting, 26/05/98)

When the beekeeper who proposed the levy remit concludes that, "it's not worth putting a remit forward if we can't even see the advantage in a joint system", the wasps quickly act to resurrect the remit. The first wasp reiterates the value of having a *formal* review:

*Wasp1:* I would be inclined to still put a remit forward on the grounds that a *review committee* be formed with three members – perhaps yourself...and a couple of other people....So perhaps...we would like to recommend to the Executive that a review group – call it what you want – look at the levy collection system as to whether it is best meeting the needs of the *beekeepers* (Branch meeting, 26/05/98).

The second wasp impels discussion along this tack by offering a way in which he would personally like to see the system modified. In doing so, he implicates the performance of the Executive Secretary and re-presents the problem as being not the change in system, but how well the current Executive Secretary is handling the system:

*Beekeeper 1:* So in actual fact, this time [the Executive Secretary] should have gone to the trouble off putting, instead of sending out the same sort of form we've had in the past, perhaps he should have gone to the trouble of knocking up a new form.

*Wasp 1:* [The Executive Secretary] received the apiary register by way of a disc okay, and he should have been able, should have mapped the other one - our membership - over that and tell you how many, well basically redesigned the

whole thing, and tell you how many apiaries you have to pay your levy on. But apparently their computer system can't cope with that.

(Branch meeting, 26/05/98)

The resulting remit, that the *apiary rating system be reviewed with a view to improvement where necessary*, is consistent with the game plans of the Canterbury wasps to denounce the performance of the Executive Secretary with a view to removing him from office. It is also in line with the concerns of Canterbury beekeepers to secure a *workable* levy system. Hence, the remit represents a compromise for regional players at that particular moment in time. The Branch President subsequently requests the beekeeper who instigated the remit to read the final version aloud, and the player makes a mistake in doing so. There is standard wording for presenting remits prescribed by the 'rules', namely that all remits begin, "*That this Conference recommends to the Executive...*". Instead, the beekeeper begins with 'That this Executive recommends...'. His mistake occasions great amusement and functions to reinforce players sense of 'the branch' and notions of common identity. A wasp observes, "we always start with that, that the Canterbury Branch charges the Executive".

In the national setting, the list administrator defends the 'new' apiary based system. He promptly points out that no levy system will be equitable because the levy has to serve a multiplicity of purposes. Nonetheless, on behalf of the Bay of Plenty Branch he votes for the Canterbury remit and rationalises this course of action on the basis of inconsistent voting rights accruing from the apiary based system. Like the Canterbury wasp, the list administrator has a vested interest in having been a prominent member of the Executive that devised the current system. Both players' reputations are at stake. The list administrator presumably wants to dislodge negative images associating him with an 'unfair' levy system. This is because these images threaten his representation of himself as an efficient administrator who, like the Canterbury wasp, explores all possible scenarios and devises the most equitable and workable solution. He is, thus, "personally motivated to preserve [the Association's] image...through association and dissociation with actions on issues", even though this may mean redefining organisational identity in his eyes (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991:548 cited in Weick, 1995:21).

It transpires at National Conference that only two Branches – Marlborough and Waikato – are against the Canterbury Branch levy remit. *Local* conditions in these regions may have rendered the current levy system highly positive for beekeepers; just as local conditions in Canterbury have rendered ‘the system’ highly negative for Canterbury players. In Waikato, for instance, greater numbers of hives are managed per apiary and, consequently, local beekeepers are likely to have experienced decreases in their levies. This means Waikato players are more accepting of the ‘new’ system and relatively tolerant of levy increases. Acceptance of the remit through majority vote illustrates that other configurations of local players in regional settings are sufficiently dissatisfied with the current levy system. This discontent is related to notions of fairness prevailing among *producers*; that all should be treated equally, especially where scales of operations are seen as being similar.

## CONCLUSION

A key purpose of Branch remits, according to an Executive player, is to provide national position holders with “an *indication* of the grassroots feelings on...things”. Remits are considered useful by national players for advising of specific concerns of locally embedded players who are, by and large, still regarded as *producers*. Discussions on the Canterbury Branch remits above have revealed ways in which this capacity is being eroded by players, like wasps, who are strategically placed to impose their ‘special’ interests in branch meetings. These players are seeking to reorder national processes through devising and executing their own understandings of ‘the national organisation’ and what they want from it. National scales of action have enabled them to do this, and are being circumvented in the process. However, it has been seen that the interests and capacities of wasps are moderated and reshaped through processes of actually articulating them to other players, like beekeepers and formal position holders, in regional contexts. As packers and marketers, wasps have a sense of ‘the National Association’ that is different. However, they still have to contend with players adhering to the rhetoric of

“those who lift the lids of beehives”, as well as other players espousing prevailing discourses of orthodoxy.

The Canterbury Branch remits tell of rhetorical strategies of local players pitting against each other, and of struggles for censorship and control. Strategies are an effect of the work players perform and the co-operative links they have with each other and different players to fulfil multiple capacities contingent upon this work. Their rhetorical devices are more or less successful depending on other networks they are moving in and the information and know-how that is available to them. In other words, players' positions in and across beekeeping fora, or their species of capital determining those positions, shape their capacities to exert an influence in branch meetings. Meetings represent contexts for locally-embedded players to get together and recreate shared understandings of beekeeping in their region; thus, realising and reproducing the ties they form with each other in carrying out their work. Meetings are also marked by struggles between players contesting 'objectivity' and 'neutrality' in the regional field in order to discover the 'truth' about the strategies of other players, like existing position holders, who are engaged in different beekeeping fora.

The wasps wield power in regional settings by virtue of their participation in electronic-mail distribution lists and on national sub-committees. They are well-placed to manipulate what beekeepers know of specific issues by circumventing information made officially available. In this way, they can hope to influence beekeepers' perceptions of 'formal' roles and of suitable applicants for those roles. Deliberations on the remit concerning a review of the performance of the current Executive Secretary, however, disclose that some Canterbury beekeepers remain unconvinced by the wasps' stories. Indeed, there is a realisation on the part of many branch players present at National Conference that the two 'critical' remits of 'the branch' are petty and unconstructive. This comes to light because of the ways differently embedded players in beekeeping interpret and respond to the remits. Beekeepers who participate in branch meetings, moreover, like to form close-knit groups in their local areas which have the effect of excluding the wasps. In these contexts, beekeepers can strengthen the rhetorical strategies that they are using to represent themselves through direct and intimate relations

with each other. They can foster mutual recognition of each other's craft practices and of constraints and opportunities presenting to their work; whereby developing a greater sense of their collective interests as a group.

Narratives sustained by Canterbury players at their remit meetings illustrate that no one group has been entirely successful at imposing their own objectivity in the regional field. The players have varying degrees of success depending on who happens to be present and their particular species of capital. Bourdieu and Wacquant note how objective relations between players in fields,

...determine for the most part who can cut somebody off, ask questions, speak at length without being interrupted, or disregard interruptions, etc., who is condemned to strategies of denegation...or to ritual refusals to answer, or to stereotypical formulas, etc. (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:258).

Branch remits, thus, speak to players ordering strategies and to power relations defining the regional field at particular moments in time and in relation to the immediate issue being discussed. Each remit assembles the disparate modes of ordering of players in different ways. It is argued that branch remits embody and reflect the state of power relations in meeting contexts between local players with different interests and multiple capacities. They are products of players articulating themselves and their skills in beekeeping in light of how other players are representing themselves, and as a consequence of evolving positions.

It is through branch remits that dominant players in different settings hope to project their interests and needs into the national setting. As forms of *local/regional* knowledge, these specific interests and needs can be formalised and also legitimated, even where remits are ultimately lost. Wasps, for example, may own few or no beehives and have minimal voting power in theory, but as marketers and packers they enjoy relative economic well-being in beekeeping. They attempt to bolster forms of political and social power in regional settings, and subsequently at National Conference, in order to match their economic capital; although they have to justify these positions to beekeepers. Beekeepers similarly want to retain social and political forms of

leverage in beekeeping. These players treat Branch meetings primarily as contexts for expressing their interests vis-à-vis fellow beekeepers and executive members present; although they can utilise these occasions to renew links with packers and marketers in their region.

For regional players, it may be more or less certain whether branch remits will be carried or lost in the national setting, and if carried what the outcome might be. Regional variability, and the capacity of branch delegates to negotiate the feeling of the national meeting and to act according to their discretion, often induce situations of uncertainty. Remits can be rejected, rendered defunct, transformed, or endorsed; presenting unintended consequences and unforeseen contingencies. This means consideration of branch remits in the national setting can function to confirm or rework the collective reputation of 'the branch', as well as the reputations of individual members. Moreover, national players may be ill-equipped to act on *local/regional* concerns expressed through branch remits, and this explains a practice of sending successful remits to initiating players for clarification in their branch meetings. The levy remit, for example, was consigned to Canterbury players to discover an alternative mechanism for calculating levies that would be 'fair' in terms of how 'beekeepers' operate in Canterbury. Where national players seek to implement remits carried at Conference, their actions may be frustrated by events which unfold in other settings and which function to distort and reshape their endeavours. Wasps, for example, can hope to influence the actions of national position holders in relation to remits, as well as speculate on the success of branch remits through participation on national sub-committees and in electronic networks.

Hence, for branch players the outcome of their concerted actions in meeting contexts is often ambiguous because of what may eventuate in other settings. This ambiguity allows differently-positioned players to treat remits as both assets and liabilities. It follows that regardless of whether remits are defeated or carried on the floor of Conference, they can signal *regional* variability or *regional* consensus in the eyes of national players. Each remit speaks to the *region* and of dominating players or, more specifically, of relations of power at particular moments in time shaping *regional* knowledge in that region. However, from the point of view of branch players remits inform

their ordering strategies and are a means by which these players renegotiate their co-operative links; whereby drawing on and reconstituting shared understandings of beekeeping in their region. The treatment of branch remits at National Conference reorders these relations relative to regional knowledge of other configurations of local players and materials, and presents ramifications for previously negotiated understandings. These processes exemplify how actions and rhetorical strategies of players in regional contexts are on-going and never complete (Law, 1994:101).





*Plate 5: A demonstration of a hive billet loader at the Canterbury Branch's field-day held at the Allenton Rugby Grounds, Ashburton, in November, 1998.*



*Plate 6: Attendees at the Canterbury Branch's field-day gather to exchange ideas at a queen raising facility of a commercial beekeeper in Ashburton.*





*Plate 7:* A Mid Canterbury beekeeper searches for the queen bee during a queen raising demonstration at the Canterbury Branch's field-day.



*Plate 8:* Discussing the intricacies of raising 'good' queen bees at the queen-raising demonstration.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 'THE LISTS': ELECTRONIC NETWORKS

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter is concerned with the ways particular information and communication technologies – electronic-mail distribution lists – are facilitating novel forms of social interaction between players involved with beekeeping. In particular, it enquires into the use of these electronic networks as political tools by individuals and groups in order to reproduce and enforce their interests and needs vis-a-vis others. Electronic-mail distribution lists open up alternative ways of ordering beekeeping where relations (or ties) between players are relatively direct and flexible. 'The lists' enable participants to post messages to a number of receivers simultaneously; whereby creating a multiplex network of players characterised by egalitarian relations and expeditious ties of information exchange. As a new resource for political leverage in beekeeping, however, the lists create and fuel conflict with players ordering beekeeping through the National Association.

Some ramifications of the distribution lists for administering beekeeping through the National Association are explored. 'Formal' roles, 'official' processes, and 'traditional' ways of communicating are presently being reshaped by players conversing electronically. This is because the lists redistribute authority across the organisation, rendering control by existing formal position holders more difficult to sustain and allowing other players to assume strategic positions. Active participants, such as wasps, engage in 'inflammatory' behaviour to incite action on the part of formal players. They also attempt to foster a sense of on-line community with fellow subscribers to further their respective work interests. Their strategies render control and censorship of the distribution lists problematic both in terms of preserving a *national* focus and retaining *national* scales of action.

Moreover, the electronic networks facilitate links between variously embedded players in beekeeping, including public and private actors. These links simultaneously challenge formal roles and national mandates, and create opportunities for improved ways of ordering craft in the contemporary environment. It follows that the distribution lists present both positive and negative contingencies for national players. Subscribers can appropriate the lists in multiple ways and for various purposes, and these are not necessarily condoned or envisaged by the wasps as 'list activists'. Indeed, players are differently positioned across beekeeping fora to participate and draw on information and knowledge negotiated on-line. This means that active participants do not always retain control over the use of list discourses in 'real' settings.

The electronic-mail distribution lists represent novel fora for communication that have been provoked by 'informal' ties between particular players. Discourses created, expressed and reworked on-line draw attention to alternative ordering strategies of different players in beekeeping. By assimilating 'official' and 'unofficial' processes, the lists therefore function to circumvent and expedite game plans through at once creating and dissolving disparities between individuals and groups. Tensions between, for example, commercial and hobbyist discourses, production and marketing interests, and craft and scientific know-how, are re-worked as on-line relations foster 'new' links between participants. This is achieved in ways which cut across categorical identities, and also undermine power dynamics inherent in face-to-face interchanges (Loader, 1997; Nohria and Berkley, 1994; Nohria and Eccles, 1992). At the same time, on-line exchanges depend on situations of physical co-presence for their existence and effectiveness. It is argued that a delicate balance of computer-mediated interaction and face-to-face communication is necessary in beekeeping. This allows players to reconfigure their relations in ways which cultivate multiple skills and capacities as required by the contemporary environment. In this way, they also assure the continuity of what is collectively perceived as the National Association.



## THE DEVELOPMENT OF 'THE LISTS'

The beekeeping distribution lists are administered by a hobbyist beekeeper and past President of the National Association. The 'list administrator' is also responsible for a New Zealand beekeeping home-page on the world-wide web. The beekeeping homepage and initial distribution list were created shortly after he was unseated as National President of the Association in 1997. Thus, the list administrator has strategically established these computer technologies to make use of his computing 'skills' and to retain some control over formal processes. He is, for instance, well placed to pronounce on the performance of 'formal' roles and to further a political stake in beekeeping. It is likely that without the list administrator's efforts, the penetration of computer technologies in beekeeping would not have taken place with the same timing and magnitude that it has.

Like 'notorious' individuals in the past, the list administrator has deployed alternative and 'unofficial' means by which to defy 'official' processes and counter the actions of formal position holders. In 1945, for example, a Canterbury player resorted to publishing his own book to document marketing 'history' from his point of view and position in beekeeping. In this way, he was able to re-present past events, not unlike Canterbury wasps in branch meetings who reconstruct prior circumstances with the benefit of hindsight to justify or critique courses of action producing negative outcomes (see chapter three). Furthermore, when a new Editor for the *The New Zealand BeeKeeper* took over in 1975, another Canterbury player apparently 'launched a rival publication of his own' (Walton, 1983:3). These players were similarly exploiting media of communication available to them to pursue 'informal' ordering strategies and enforce their particular interests and needs in beekeeping. This was done in response to the actions of formal players.

The list administrator is branded a 'computer whiz' by other players in beekeeping, especially current formal position holders, in order to distinguish him from players adhering to the rhetoric of "those who lift the lids of beehives". This branding is a strategy to both ostracise him in beekeeping and to preserve 'conventional' ways of administering the craft. The current

National President succeeded the list administrator in the formal role, and the distribution lists have evolved out of antagonism towards this particular player on the part of what was initially a loose confederation of co-conspirators sharing similar interests. Both lists present a challenge to formal players and to prevailing 'discourses of orthodoxy' simply because they are perceived as a vehicle or 'mouthpiece' for the list administrator and his fellow 'wasps' (Bourdieu, 1993). The list administrator observes that,

...one of my good friends on the list commented to me and said he was concerned that my criticisms of the Executive would work against me...and that he was afraid people would see the list as *my* list and my vehicle for criticising the Executive. I've talked to him about it...and I agreed with some of it and at that point I actually set up a second address where every once and a while you'll see something that comes from 'listmom'....So I'm trying now to actually create a new identity which is not me that is managing the list. That sounds funny, I know, but when somebody gets a message that says this is off topic...it won't come from [me] it will come from 'listmom' (Interview, August, 1998).

Moreover, whenever the list administrator feels important decisions need to be made concerning the running of the distribution lists, he prefers to distribute decision-making amongst subscribers. This is part of his game plan: The list administrator wants to downplay perceptions of other players that he 'controls' material on 'the lists' with the hope that formal players will embrace the 'NBA' list for 'official' purposes. The list administrator advises new subscribers on the 'Welcome to the NZ Beekeepers Distribution List' page that,

While I have set up the list, and read it as avidly as the rest of you, I will not intervene, selectively discard messages or 'control' the subscriptions in any way (NZBkprs List, 1997).

The initial list, the 'NZBkprs' list, was a hybrid in the sense that it was utilised by players who wanted to discuss particular aspects of the craft of beekeeping in ways not traditionally possible, as well as those players engaging in ordering *national* scales of action in beekeeping. The list administrator purports to having established this list with a view to providing a

distribution list with a *New Zealand* beekeeping focus. This was in light of international beekeeping distribution lists already in existence. He also wanted to provide a service to *New Zealand* beekeepers by supplementing existing forms of communication within the National Association. In order to initiate the 'NZBkprs' list, he utilised social and professional networks to tap into 'public' and 'private' players involved with beekeeping. As a past President, Executive player, hobbyist beekeeper and beekeeping employee, he was well placed to do this.

Of the original subscribers to the 'NZBkprs' list a marked proportion were apparently 'public' players, such as Apicultural Advisory Officers (AAOs) and Horticultural Research Scientists. The list enabled these players to communicate more directly and frequently with locally embedded players and hobbyists. In doing so, it introduced alternative forms of communicating that are responsive and timely.

(T)o begin with of the original fifteen, ten of them would have been advisory. That number hasn't changed. They all got on there first, almost everybody since then has been beekeepers joining. And that's been...fifty-fifty as near as I can tell between hobbyist and commercial.

The first person to join was a hobbyist, and I think the second was commercial. It went up to fifteen in the first day or two, stayed there for a little while, and then it just clicked. And it stayed at 70 for a while, and its not quite touching 100 right now. I'm looking forward to seeing who the 100th is going to be (Interview, August, 1998).

Approximately one year later, the 'NZBkprs' list was divided to reflect different interests and patterns of use on the part of subscribers. Calhoun accounts for why this division may have taken place:

Discussion groups may transcend the spatial community, thus, but they do so precisely by linking people with *similar* interests, not by forging links among people sharply different from one another (1998:385).

This may also account for the presence of 'silent' subscribers on the lists who have weak links with fellow subscribers in 'real' settings (see below). It follows

that the distribution lists may not “facilitate coming to know [other players] in the multiplicity of their different identities so much as the segmentation of these different categories from each other” (Calhoun, 1998:392).

The new list, the ‘NBA’ list, is purportedly restricted to members of the National Association and is intended for ‘specific postings’ relating to the organisation. On the ‘Welcome to the NBA Distribution List’ page, the list administrator declares that,

All matters related to the National Beekeepers’ Association are appropriate content for the list – levies, politics, Executive matters, comments on minutes, reports, meeting and field-day announcements – and you can be confident that the postings will only be going directly to other NBA members (NBA List, 12/08/98).

In theory, though, anyone who subscribes to the *The New Zealand BeeKeeper* is an ordinary member of the Association and is entitled to subscribe to the ‘NBA’ list. ‘Public’ actors are frequently bestowed honorary or life memberships and can participate in these capacities. Moreover, the division between the lists breaks down in practice: Subscribers may accidentally post messages to the wrong list or to both lists simultaneously, and threads of conversation tend to spasmodically cut across the lists because membership overlaps.

The distribution lists have become entangled with the formal Association, and their scope arguably depends on being able to develop and augment organisational ways of doing things. The list administrator notes of the ‘NZBkprs’ list that,

I set this list up to assist communication among New Zealand beekeepers. I am confident that there will be a quick uptake of the technologies of email and the internet generally, and I wanted to try to anticipate the needs for rapid industry-wide dissemination of information (NZBkprs List, 1997).



When membership of the 'NZBkprs' list attained one hundred after one year in existence, an active participant and 'wasp' on the list commended the list administrator for providing a medium in beekeeping affording multiple uses:

...you have provided the fastest method we have ever had in this beekeeping industry of disseminating information in a hell of a hurry to a hell of a lot of people....At a time when we have lost many of the formal structures for information sharing – MAF advisory newsletters, Buzzwords, government sponsored seminars etc, the availability of a fast-reaction medium like E-mail is a God-send. Not necessarily for *those of us who want to provide a bit of 'ginger' under the tails of our administration, but for all of us to keep in close contact with the sharp end of the beekeeping ship* (NZBkprs List, 09/10/98).

This view is shared by the list administrator who responds by observing how both lists have,

...truly exceeded even my expectations for level of debate, information exchange and \*immediacy\* of communication....I think we have the makings of an excellent way of communicating all sorts of things about our hobby, business, industry, markets, methods and ideas! (NZBkprs List, 25/12/98).

The potential of the lists as a *shadow organisation* has been recognised by another active participant and 'wasp' who observes in a message posted to the initial list that,

[a] summary of the people/Companies/Organizations on this mailing list reveals how far it reaches into (nearly) all the decision makers in our beekeeping industry (NZBkprs List, 24/06/98).

This player had performed an analysis of 'subscribers' on the 'NZBkprs' list before its division. His analysis revealed an array of beekeeping players: past and present Branch Secretaries and Presidents, past National Presidents and Vice Presidents, previous Executive players, sub-committees members, exporters, packers, researchers, and government officials. The list administrator purports to being surprised by the wasp's findings:

That surprised me when he did that – it did. The pervasiveness of the list amongst decision-makers. Because I hadn't realised it was that powerful (Interview, August, 1998).

In other words, the distribution lists bring together and reassemble political, commercial, scientific and marketing interests of players, and interweave public and private discourses in beekeeping. This effects different forms of association between players, producing alternative accounts or representations of 'formal' activities.

Indeed, the *categories* identified by the wasp in his analysis misrepresent the capacities of players subscribing to the distribution lists because in actuality these players have multiple roles and interests in beekeeping which they may be fulfilling simultaneously through 'the lists'. It is not always clear from the point of view of list subscribers in which capacities players may be acting when posting messages on each list. Formal roles and attributes are useful for locating players in and across beekeeping fora relative to other players, and for attempting to account for their actions. However, these categorisations are undone through list discourses characterised by voluminous and impulsive interchanges between participants (discussed below). The distribution lists give rise to "increases in capabilities for communication flows...[which] break down existing authority structures...usually reinforced by determining and controlling access to information" (Nohria and Eccles, 1992:291).

A marked proportion of active participants on both distribution lists are previous 'formal' position holders in the NBA. This social and political status has secured them a voice in the electronic networks, and informs their active use of the medium. They are well positioned to draw on existing networks and accumulated experiential know-how in order to reclaim pivotal positions and to advance their shifting interests. Hobbyist beekeepers, formerly uninvolved in organising beekeeping as non-members of the NBA, are also emancipated by electronic networks. These 'new' players have distinct sets of skills and expertise which assume greater significance in the de-regulated environment. These skills also acquire greater utility on-line than they would via 'official' or

conventional channels. It is argued, therefore, that referring to 'formal' attributes or traditional categorisations of list subscribers in 'real' settings does not address the full import of threads of correspondence and dialogues being sustained on-line.

## CATEGORICAL IDENTITIES AND PROFESSIONAL DISCOURSES

Strong ties are being fostered on the distribution lists between research scientists, 'public' actors, hobbyist beekeepers and 'wasps'; although these relations may appear ephemeral from the point of view of 'silent' subscribers. The ties alter the nature of the science/craft interface and public/private relations as traditionally experienced by players. A discernible lack of preparation and forethought in many of the messages posted on the lists by 'public' players, for example, challenges stereotypical conceptions of these players as 'professional' people. In addition, 'public' players appear to exert little control over who actually responds to questions and issues they raise on-line. This breaks down façades of 'formality' and traditional modes of imparting scientific and professional knowledge to grassroots players. Consequently, it is on-line that 'public' players are afforded direct and instant interfaces with locally embedded players so that all parties coexist in shared social space.

Participating in electronic networks can, however, be a two-edged sword for 'public' players. Being positioned on an equal or level footing with other participants on-line means being exposed to higher levels of scrutiny and 'open' attacks on the part of locally-embedded players. Active participants, in particular, contest the knowledge and expertise of 'public' players in ways which are highly visible to other list subscribers. Hence, at one level, the distribution lists promote and embody egalitarian ties between heterogeneous players in ways not previously done. At another level, the 'categorical identities' of players are reshaped through other players making sense of, and undoing, their postings in ways which challenge or displace taken-for-granted attributes.

The following example illustrates ways in which competing discourses of players intersect via the electronic-mail beekeeping distribution lists. In particular, it reveals how professional discourses are at once dissected and expanded in negotiation with grassroots players. A member of 'the Executive' has instigated a 'thread' of correspondence by posting a message on the 'NZBkprs' list requesting information on the 'sort of crops' beekeepers are 'seeing round the country':

...I know it's a bit early but if you have any indications of yields I would be very interested (NZBkprs List, 13/01/99).

It is unclear from the point of view of fellow subscribers whether he is acting in an official capacity as Executive player or informally as a 'beekeeper'. He may simply be trying to draw on the distribution lists in less confrontational ways which cross 'status and power boundaries' (Wellman, Salaff, Dimitrova, Garton, Gulia and Haythornwaite, 1996:227).

The generic marketing consultant for the Association is the first player to respond to the Executive player's request. He has previously had intermittent and indirect contact with local and regional players in beekeeping mainly through reports in the beekeeping magazine and annual presentations at National Conference. The on-line exchanges enable him to foster, with relative ease, direct and intimate relations with different players in beekeeping. He suggests that,

[The] email is very timely.....Just before Christmas we got a TV news story on air about a manuka shortage in the North....I was going to follow it up with a media release about the crop overall at the end of January: so comments on this site also appreciated by me.

It seems certain that there's going to be a below-average crop! That means less income for beekeepers: and we can't stop the weather doing that BUT WHAT WE CAN DO...is make sure that packers and buyers and agents don't keep suggesting that there's plenty of stock around and that the price will come down....For beekeepers to have a low crop is beyond their control...for

beekeepers to get less for the smaller crop or to get less for their reserve stock because of misinformation...is very wrong (NZBkprs List, 14/01/99).

The consultant appears to be using the distribution lists to project himself as a competent player in beekeeping. He hopes to demonstrate not only marketing knowledge, but also familiarity with issues and problems being encountered by players producing honey for a living. Participating on-line is a way of securing credibility for his work.

A North Island beekeeper subsequently relates the performance of his hives near Upper Hutt. His predictions of an above average season have been proved wrong and he remarks that, "in my 25 years as an apiarist, this is the strangest season I have experienced to say the least. I too will be interested to hear reports from others" (NZBkprs List, 14/01/99). A semi-commercial beekeeper also responds, providing a comprehensive summation of weather patterns and flowering nectar sources in the areas where he keeps bees. He observes of the west Auckland and north-Waikato areas:

...cabbage tree in the waitakeres started the season off about 1 month early & gave me about a 3/4D box of honey b4 mid-dec. the manuka was also a bit early but only lasted 3 weeks & was all gone about xmas day. don't expect too much there. the kanuka followed shortly afterward with a good flourish & the bees have been working it hard till now. i only expect a couple more weeks on the kanuka then that will be the end of the season (NZBkprs List, 14/01/99).

survived on early season willow & pussy willow, then buttercup & dandelion till xmas. what the hell happened to the manuka!!!!???...about half the hives haven't even ventured up into the supers, the rest wld have about 1/2 of a 3/4D super of mainly buttercup....i understand the same is true for others around pukekohe & on the hauraki plains (NZBkprs List, 14/01/99).

The marketing consultant interprets from the semi-commercial beekeeper's posting that he considers buttercup honey of inferior quality relative to honeys like manuka. The consultant thereby uses his initiative to create marketing opportunities for this player:

...the good news is that Buttercup is a delicious honey!  
 But you'll not get it treated with respect by most of the buyers.  
 I'd be interested to see someone try marketing it in niche areas: once tasted  
 often bought thereafter I would think (NZBkprs List, 14/01/99).

However, the beekeeper retorts in a subsequent posting,

u wanna bet!!! customers go berserk over the rich "buttery" flavour. never had  
 a dissatisfied customer yet....!!! And if packers don't pay the price, i just sell it  
 myself (at my price!). I've never had so much as a jar unspoken for to  
 date...(NZBkprs List, 14/01/99).

At this, the marketing consultant apologises, and clarifies to whom he is  
 referring by the label 'buyers':

...I was referring to the people who buy your honey to market and sell to  
 customers and consumers. So instead of buyers I should have said 'packers' or  
 'agents' or 'brands'.

What some people need to start doing is marketing vintage honeys...special  
 selections...and as with premium wines not every variety will be available every  
 season...why don't you talk with a delicatessen or top foodie cafe cum grocery  
 about selling your buttercup in their own label....(the Dixon Street Deli Waikato  
 Buttercup honey....specially gathered for the Dixon Street Deli by master  
 beekeeper, [name of beekeeper]....

[A]nd put on some very clean (new even) and professional looking bee gear and  
 go into the deli at peak times and do tastings....with your traditional beekeeper  
 hat on.....if you don't have the personality to do that put your partner in the  
 bee gear and have her do it...you'll be amazed at how people have a positive  
 attitude to bees and beekeepers and honey...(NZBkprs List, 15/01/99).

The consultant forthwith changes subject and inquires whether any list  
 subscribers have noticed "how some of our famous Creamed Clover Honey is  
 darker than manuka this year....have one or two brands no shame?" He  
 comments,

I think the future lies in the hands of the fit the fast the bright and the  
 cheeky...and the good news is that you don't need to have a big company and

lots of capital and a 'ruthless cost efficiency' and corporate objectives and a fat discounting pen to be fit and fast and bright and cheeky (NZBkprs List, 15/01/99).

The consultant immediately attracts the attention of a honey exporter and marketer, who happens to be a 'wasp':

Nothing very unusual there [first name of marketing consultant]. Some of the "Creamed Clover Honey" appearing on the retail shelves has ALWAYS been darker than an average manuka, EVERY year!

However, as an industry we do have a problem when product labelled as "PREMIUM WHITE CLOVER HONEY" appears which is darker than the average manuka honey... (NZBkprs List, 15/01/99).

As Chairman of the Honey Exporters Joint Action Group (JAG), currently devising standards for manuka honey, the wasp alludes to the need for honey standards. His comments re-ignite an earlier thread of correspondence pertaining to honey standards, which was precipitated by events that unfolded at National Conference in 1998. The ensuing discussions circumvent the resolve of Executive players at that Conference to leave the development of honey standards until JAG players have prescribed their own. The issue is thrashed out on the distribution lists because a number of participants also happen to be JAG members.

Correspondence on honey yields continues when a Nelson beekeeper describes considerable hives losses in his region due seemingly to wet and cold weather conditions:

(S)o many were lost through starvation but several of us found multiple hive losses in the colder zones with HEAPS of honey on board and the theory is that the brood rearing ceased in the rain and there were no new bees to replace the worn out winter bees. There were too many loses to attribute the losses to queen failures...the hives weren't even robbed out as the other bees couldn't get out to steal it!!!

So, many local beekeepers are going to get a NIL crop due to spring loss and low bees numbers added to the poor flowering of the manuka (NZBkprs List, 17/01/99).

His posting prompts reflexivity on the part of other locally-embedded players as to further reasons for the hives losses. In this way, players are expanding their craft and local knowledge through different uses of the electronic medium. The value of story-telling, discussed in chapter one as a means of constituting and developing craft knowledge, also impresses here; although the scale of operations is notably different.

For instance, a *semi-commercial* beekeeper from Wellington draws on his experiential knowledge of raising queens in his area. He inquires whether beekeepers in Nelson have checked their hives for pollen shortages, recounting how he came to recognise this as a potential problem (NZBkprs List, 20/01/99). In response, the Nelson beekeeper admits to not having checked for pollen as "we always have such a problem with SURPLUS pollen" (NZBkprs List, 21/01/99). At around this point, a South Island honey packer and Canterbury wasp feels compelled to enter the discussion. He advises,

Just a tip on pollen abundance. Generally bees feed pollen to brood overnight and most plants give off pollen most prolifically in the morning. If you have surplus pollen \*early in the morning\* (fluffy bright coloured stuff in the brood nest as opposed to greasy looking stuff perhaps mixed or covered with honey) then there is adequate pollen coming in...(NZBkprs List, 20/01/99).

In his message, the Wellington beekeeper also furnishes a detailed report of weather conditions in his area and how his bees have been faring at different points in the season. His analysis reveals the sensitivity of 'beekeepers' to weather patterns, flowering fauna, and land conditions. These phenomena constitute beekeepers' local knowledge and were discussed in chapter one:

Waikanae north had sufficient rain (after the floods), every two weeks or so and this has kept things going. There are still paddocks of clover to be seen close in against the hills. Normally I don't get a good clover flow because its too



wet, (normally rains once a week) and the flowers don't last long on rotation grazed paddocks.

South of Paraparaumu dried to a crisp resulting in a very patchy flow....

Five days of mist and rain has greened the place up again – catsear, clover, lotus major, penny royal, fennel and even whitey wood is flowering again...(NZBkprs List, 20/01/99).

The beekeeper also remarks that “a hobbyist reported to me that the southern Wairarapa were doing OK on *thistle and other rubbish*, although very dry (emphasis added)”. This compels the marketing consultant to re-enter the discussion as he is somewhat perturbed by this comment:

Thistle, my naughty [first name of beekeeper], creates one of the most beautiful and seductive of honey's...elegant and refined and delicate and simply superb...at least on a par with that lovely Pohutakawa of yours (NZBkprs List, 20/01/99).

At this, the honey exporter and Chairman of the JAG posts a message counteracting the marketing consultant. In doing so, he directs attention to different perceptions of honey varieties on the part of producers and packers embedded in distinct local contexts and who are presented with alternative markets for products.

YES – if you are talking about Nodding Thistle [first name of marketing consultant].

NO!! if you are talking about Californian thistle or maybe Scotch Thistle. In this part of the country where Noddies are almost non-existent but Californians are plentiful, when the bees are forced to gather from them in the absence of clover, the honey is rubbish, at least from an *extracting* point of view (NZBkprs List, 21/01/99; emphasis added).

## ON-LINE NETWORKS AND 'REAL' SETTINGS

It has been demonstrated in previous chapters that face-to-face interaction and the physical embodiment of skill are crucial for 'beekeepers'

imparting practical know-how and negotiating regional knowledge in branch meetings. Situations of physical co-presence, like these, allow beekeepers to simultaneously work out and challenge the meanings of each other and different players participating in beekeeping fora on the basis of cues, such as, hand and body language, tone of voice, and facial expressions. It is through face-to-face contact that 'beekeepers' work out what it means to 'lift the lids of beehives', and come to embody and perform their craft in relation to others. It is also through these processes that different players, including packers, marketers, hobbyists, government officials, and research scientists, similarly distinguish themselves in relations with 'beekeepers'.

Like other technological advances, computer technologies are unlikely to dissolve the distinction between 'body' and 'machine' in beekeeping. Chapter one discussed the essence of hand and body knowledge utilised in the fields 'doing the bees'. These forms of knowledge, for example, cannot be transmitted via electronic mediums. Indeed, the proportion of players adhering to the rhetoric of "those who lift the lids of beehives" who are subscribed on the lists is low compared to public players and wasps. The lack of participation by beekeepers both enables and constrains the use of electronic networks as political tools on the part of wasps given that beekeepers are treated as composing 'the membership' of the National Association. Sitting behind a computer may infringe conceptions 'beekeepers' have of themselves doing the bees and working with nature (see chapter one). It is likely, for instance, to be associated with physical inertia, in marked contrast to the lifestyles they typically lead.

The potential to reciprocate local knowledge and working practice through the 'NZBkprs' list holds the greatest promise for the adoption of computer technologies by 'beekeepers'. This is because electronic-mail distribution lists can overcome geographical barriers that may have impeded communication between beekeepers and other players in the past; whereby making more regular interchange possible. However, as explored in chapters one and three, beekeepers keeping bees in local areas recognise ties of interdependency with each other and form close-knit groups based on relations of trust and reciprocity. These groups already accommodate and

reinforce the necessity of strong ties between local players and are a means through which local knowledge is reproduced. It is unlikely that computer-mediated exchanges can substitute for face-to-face interaction in these circumstances as relations between players are highly robust and usually involve the mobilisation of some sort of collective activity (Nohria and Eccles, 1992:290;297).

With on-line communications, greater emphasis is accorded to written language in order to make up for 'deficiencies' in other cues. A tendency to be frank and to the point is an attempt to overcome this problem, but means written messages often engender perceptions of senders as more aggressive (Wellman, et al, 1996:223-4). Thus, the choice of words becomes critically important to avoid offence, and to minimise unintended consequences for senders. Nevertheless, participants on the beekeeping distribution lists tend to overlook the importance of written words in their on-line relations, and this is problematic, especially when 'new' players start participating. It may be conducive to misunderstandings which are avoided or readily rectified in situations of face-to-face contact. This is because face-to-face interchange offers an "unusual capacity for interruption, repair, feedback and learning" (Nohria and Eccles, 1992:293).

Language deployed by list participants tends to be casual and less planned relative to other forms of written communication. List postings resemble verbal speech because they contain, for example, spelling and grammatical errors, incomplete sentences, colloquialisms, and missing words. They are like direct recordings of a person's stream of consciousness, espoused from the keyboard rather than the mouth, and without the verbal nuances, non-verbal cues, and physical context cues to aid interpretation of meaning (Wellman, et al., 1996:218). The players are less inhibited by conventional etiquette prescribing the use of language. This is despite each word and phrase acquiring greater significance and being interpreted and assigned meaning by different players.

Subscribers on the beekeeping distribution lists make sense of list postings on the basis of their particular interests, positions and experiences in

beekeeping. Consequently, they have divergent customs for using words. Written representations, giving rise to multiple translations and expectations, fuel misconceptions and delusions on the part of players. In certain circumstances, misconceptions and delusions prompt reflexivity, sparking 'new' ideas and, ultimately, giving rise to positive contingencies. However, control and censorship of list correspondence is rendered troublesome for players, especially where large numbers of subscribers do not overtly participate in the threads of conversation. This is due to the "limited social presence...encourag[ing] the misinterpretation of remarks, and the asynchronous nature of most [threads of correspondence] hinder[ing] the immediate repair of damages" (Wellman, et al, 1996:223-4). A range of interests and needs on the part of list subscribers, and diverse patterns of use, exacerbate the problem. It also frustrates players' attempts to create a sense of on-line community marked by co-operative links between participants.

While electronic networks overcome traditional limitations of time and space, the beekeeping distribution lists illustrate that on-line exchanges are not necessarily as effective as face-to-face interaction. This is especially so where the accounts of list activists produce ambiguous, uncertain or conflicting situations requiring multiple cues for sense-making (Weick, 1995; Nohria and Eccles, 1992). In fact, threads of correspondence often create or perpetuate these conditions because subscribers, especially those with weak links in 'real' settings, may have "relationships [which] are inadequate for processing the information" exchanged on-line (Nohria and Eccles, 1992:301). This means face-to-face interaction is actually needed. Consequently, Nohria and Eccles suggest that,

...as the amount of electronically mediated exchanges increases, there has to be a corresponding increase in the amount of face-to-face interaction (1992:301).

This also explains the participation of 'public' players on the distribution lists whose interests are well-defined by, and in relation to, other players. Their actions can more readily be associated with their performance of 'official' mandates and formal roles.

It is argued, therefore, that active participants on the distribution lists require branch meetings and functions at National Conference to make sense of, and validate, circumstances and events discussed on-line. Face-to-face settings in beekeeping provide resolution of situations and issues created or inflamed by list correspondence because they represent contexts of robust cues for interpreting the actions of others. While electronic networks "increase the range, amount, and velocity of information...[their] viability and effectiveness...depend critically on underlying network[s] of social relationships" (Nohria and Eccles, 1992:290). It follows that the distribution lists may be useful for generating ideas and proposals for action, but seldom for procuring decisive action. Trust is harder to secure on-line where there is not 'eye-ball to eye-ball' contact, and, face-to-face interaction "captures not just impressions "given" but those "given-off" (Nohria and Eccles, 1992:293).

Subscribers to the distribution lists require face-to-face interaction with each other and different players to determine the authenticity of their on-line relations and the validity of information being exchanged. This is in addition to being able to put into effect ideas and courses of action initiated on-line. Wasps, research scientists and 'public' players, for instance, have to form ties with beekeepers in order to carry out their interests and capacities in beekeeping. These relations take shape in situations of physical co-presence where 'list activists' ultimately have to put on simulated performances to secure the trust of beekeepers. Chapter two traced the strategies of these players in national fora struggling to this end. For this reason, electronic networks are unlikely to compose a counter organisation to the NBA. These networks are linked to the formal organisation and its official processes, but cannot be mapped entirely over them (Nohria and Eccles, 1992:289).

National Conference is treated as the prime arena for engaging in political struggles because it assembles a cross-section of players involved with beekeeping in shared time and space. This enables players to interpret others and their actions using all senses, in addition to non-verbal and contextual cues. Indeed, at Conference in 1998 players were able to contest the existence and purpose of computer technologies in beekeeping. A late

remit was produced by the Southern North Island Branch recommending that Executive players take over the running costs of the beekeeping homepage:

*Branch Delegate:* First of all, we see the internet site as being one of the important interfaces of the industry – New Zealand – with the world...and because of that we think the NBA should have some association with it....It is an excellent site, it is viewed by the world who will view it as representing New Zealand beekeeping. It should be co-ordinated by the NBA in my opinion (National Conference, 23/07/98).

Discussions pertaining to the remit expose some of the underlying antagonisms and misconceptions of computer technologies on the part of particular players. For example, confusion is exhibited by Executive members, particularly older members, concerning the distinction between 'web-sites' and electronic-mail distribution lists:

*Canterbury wasp:* I think there is a very great misunderstanding that goes round in this industry, and that is that e-mail messages are being posted on the internet. They are not. There is a mailing list which people subscribe to which [the list administrator] happens to run which people make comments upon. That is not a homepage. It is not open to the world....We are talking two totally separate issues. Please be clear about that. One is a group that knowingly and wantonly subscribe to a service provided by [the list administrator]. The other one is a homepage...which anybody that gets access to the internet can go and have a look at, whether they are in Timbucktoo, Antarctic or here in Waitangi (National Conference, 23/07/98).

High levels of scepticism levelled at computer technologies on the part of 'formal' position holders create and perpetuate these misunderstandings and stem from the perceived interests of players participating on the distribution lists. This has spin-offs for beekeepers – those lifting the lids of beehives – who come to equate computer technologies with conflict. The technologies are seen as being in opposition to what they know and are used to, and this ultimately frustrates and undermines the productivity and enjoyment of National Conference. Beekeepers not only compose an 'audience' on the floor of Conference, they are also 'adjudicators' of what

takes place and of the interests at stake. Consequently, it becomes a contest between formal position holders and 'list activists' to 'properly' represent computer technologies to 'beekeepers', especially the electronic-mail distribution lists. Both groups want to successfully claim to be acting in the interests of 'beekeepers'. A battle emerges between informal and formal ordering strategies in the name of 'common sense'.

An unintended consequence for 'list activists' is the alienation at National Conference of some of the very players whom they need to embrace and win the support of:

*Hawkes Bay Branch delegate:* Mr Chairman I believe that [first name of list administrator]'s site, although I am not computer literate at all, is a useful function. Um, I don't believe that the NBA should have anything to do with it. If it wants it's own site of whatever form, it should do its own and let [the list administrator] have his own site. I think the two things are incompatible, and I would like to vote on this now please.

...

*Hawkes Bay Branch delegate:* We are looking at cutting costs. Are we going to save \$400 in postage by using this?

...

*Southern North Island delegate:* ...There will be no savings...(I)t needs to be made clear. What we're talking about, what we're trying to talk about, is basically an electronic brochure that anyone in the world can look at....I have to note um or regret that I think I have opened up a can of worms (National Conference, 23/07/98).

The remit is nevertheless passed by majority vote, and the episode illustrates how the national setting is availed of by list subscribers to earn 'official' acceptance of computer technologies in beekeeping. The list administrator is called upon to put forward a proposal to Executive players for 'formal' adoption of the technologies; although he is hesitant in doing so because an earlier offer had been rejected. It is one of the Canterbury Branch wasps who instigates this course of action:

*List administrator:* I'm willing to provide the NBA with a place that it can post information to members – not to take up more than the equivalent, at any given time, of two or three A4 pages of writing – for a fee...*on condition* that the NBA would actually begin to take full and constructive part in the e-mail distribution list...as a means of providing minutes and NBA information electronically... (National Conference, 23/07/98).

## ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS

Active participants on the electronic-mail distribution lists are keen to infiltrate 'official' practices at every opportunity, and tend to be 'wasps' interested in disputing the actions of players fulfilling formal roles, like the Executive Secretary and existing National President. These players initiate threads of correspondence on issues and topics relevant to their own interests in beekeeping which are then presented as being of concern to the wider NBA 'membership'. They actively participate on the distribution lists to frustrate and/or hasten a whole range of 'formal' processes, such as petitioning for rule changes, disputing decision-making procedures, demanding greater accountability, reproducing 'official' information on-line, and speculating on the financial affairs of the National Association.

Just as the rhetoric of "those who lift the lids of beehives", explored in Chapter one, is shaped in face-to-face encounters between local players in 'real' settings, the rhetoric of 'wasps' takes form through written representations on the distribution lists. These players, like various 'public' officials, are using electronic networks to reconstitute aspects of their work vis-a-vis each other, and to preserve their species of capital in beekeeping. They are able to act to conserve or increase their social status and political leverage through being in a position to foster direct and personal relations with a broader range of players, including hobbyist beekeepers. This places them in equivalent or strategic positions relative to national players and commercial beekeepers who also move in different circles. Moreover, the wasps are well placed in and across beekeeping fora to be of use to the list administrator by actively participating on the distribution lists. The list administrator is also of



use to them in enabling the expression of their ideas and concerns in novel and more 'effective' ways. Their expertise lies less in beekeeping craft, and more in business, marketing and administration; yet their participation serves to reproduce beliefs in the value of on-line forms of communication in beekeeping. It also fosters or reproduces strong ties with the list administrator.

The distribution lists embody the idea that knowledge is a product of collective efforts: Knowledge is constituted by the ways in which individuals assign and communicate meanings to their work and experiences, and how those meanings are worked through by other players in subsequent postings. Active participants on the lists exchange competing ways of knowing out of which emerge shared understandings on courses of action that are distinct from, and which also overlap, formal and legitimate channels of ordering. The players contest, interpret, and draw on each other's list postings in ways which are consistent with their local contexts, specific interests, and particular expectations of the medium. They also draw on the distribution lists tactically to generate or foster 'new' ideas and innovative strategies. This affords a 'democratisation of knowledge', where interaction is shaped less by the dynamics of physical co-presence, and more by how particular players are differently positioned across other fora to use the technology and to participate in list discourses. It follows that list correspondence is a product of social interaction, as well as representing an ordering tool used by players. Active participants are both makers and users of representations and what results cannot be attributed to clear and single authorship (Becker, 1986).

Active participants on the distribution lists regularly seek the help of fellow subscribers in order to make representations to other players in 'real' settings. This means material is not necessarily posted on the lists in the form of an 'argument' with an intended audience in mind, so that the language used immediately conveys meaning for particular users (Becker, 1986). Instead, correspondence, especially on the 'NZBkprs' list, frequently embodies requests for information on the part of individual players, including research scientists. A notable proportion of list messages, for instance, begin with "I would appreciate hearing from anyone who has..." and "Does anyone out there

know anything about...". These sorts of messages invariably produce responses from a range of players which can be 'ransacked for answers' by others, and often serve as catalysts for extended threads of conversation (Becker, 1986:131).

Reciprocal actions on the part of active participants responding to the requests are highly visible to subscribers, and this means that "individual acts can aggregate to sustain a large community because each act is seen by the entire group and perpetuates a norm of mutual aid" (Wellman, et al, 1996:223). For example, when a semi-commercial beekeeper seeks advice from fellow subscribers concerning a honey house that he is wanting to construct 'in the back of the section', he is responded to at length by a South Island honey packer and Canterbury wasp. The beekeeper admits that his honey house is not going to be a 'huge operation'; although he wants sufficient capacity to handle the harvest obtained from 150 hives, as well as additional honey that he either buys in or extracts on behalf of other beekeepers:

(I)n keeping with the size i'll probably install a 4 frame extractor, with all the usual pump, heated baffle tank, wax reducer, hot water etc, etc, etc....is there anyone out there who can tell me what sort of power supply (kWt's) i'll need to power the operation? the sparky needs to know so he can give me a quote...unfortunately 3 phase power is NOT an option for this honey house....is there anyone else in the akl area who wld be willing to let me do a study tour of their honey house. i don't want to go reinventing the wheel...if i can avoid it (NZBkprs List, 22/06/98).

The honey packer replies by making claims to both packer and producer knowledge:

It's a good idea to do some basic calculations of volume of throughput and calculate the required heating. Too many hot rooms are under powered for heating and when the product is not up to temperature in the desired time the reaction of many is to turn up the thermostat ending up with hot spots in some areas with the inevitable damage combs in the extractor (NZBkprs List, 22/06/98).

Communications like these evoke further reciprocal relations and entrench a sense of belonging or 'community' on the part of subscribers, especially active participants (Wellman et al., 1996). Active participants exhibit strong attachments to 'the lists' and appear to find social support and companionship in computer-mediated discourses (Wellman et al., 1996:223). This is due in part to their on-line relations building on interpersonal ties which they already have by virtue of face-to-face contact. The distribution lists allow participants to stay in touch between official meetings and other face-to-face functions in beekeeping (Calhoun, 1998:383). This is unlike 'silent' subscribers who may have weak or non-existent ties with fellow subscribers in 'real' settings. Calhoun remarks of the 'Internet' in general that it,

...makes it easier for us to do some things we were already doing and allows those with the resources to do some things they already wanted to do....(T)he main impact, especially in the short to medium term, will be to allow us to do more of things we already were organized and oriented to do (1998:382).

Moreover, for active participants "providing reciprocal support and information on-line is a means of increasing self-esteem, demonstrating technical expertise, earning respect and status, and responding to norms of mutual aid" (Wellman et al, 1996:223). These players utilise the distribution lists to secure credibility in the eyes of fellow subscribers who may subsequently become formal position holders, and to expand co-operative links with different players. At the same time, they realise their participation on the lists produces conflict for existing role occupants in the National Association and distinguishes them from players adhering to the rhetoric of "those who lift the lids of beehives". In this way, active participants are hedging their bets while acting to conserve or increase their political clout in beekeeping.

## SILENT SUBSCRIBERS

Atypical members on the beekeeping distribution lists are 'silent' subscribers who maintain degrees of anonymity, especially from the

perspective of active participants who brand them 'free-riders'. How these players put to use information negotiated on the lists appears to be of concern to active participants. Silent subscribers are viewed with levels of suspicion and distrust because they are known to receive postings, but are not seen to 'reciprocate' by posting their own. They are deemed troublesome because they frustrate attempts by active participants to create shared understandings of the contexts in which they are delivering information. The list administrator is not perturbed by this lack of participation, however, claiming that it is 'normal' for two thirds of subscribers to make no postings:

There's a lot of people who listen to the list just as a way of getting information. That's no problem. I don't have, there's no, you must post once a week or you'll get zapped (Interview, August, 1998).

'Silent' subscribers may perceive no advantage in actually participating on the lists; yet presumably 'listen in' on list correspondence and are not 'passive' recipients of information. By strategically using and divulging information obtained via the distribution lists in relations with other players in 'real' settings, silent subscribers are arguably extending the electronic networks. Their actions stimulate new members and cross-fertilise knowledge, and may appease conflict through disseminating list correspondence to different players. Indeed, 'silent' subscribers are in strategic positions by virtue of having weak on-line ties which act as "bridges between diverse sources of information" (Wellman et al, 1996:220, Granovetter, 1982). The presence of these players on the lists, consequently, both enables and constrains list correspondence. An active participant observes in relation to the initial 'NZBkprs' list that,

This list even could be more valuable if we can persuade people with differing (not seen yet on this list) views to join as well and more of the current subscribers participate in the discussion. Wouldn't it be great to see all the different thoughts, ideas etc. from all corners of this industry on this list (NZBkprs List, 10/10/98).

The extent to which silent subscribers and active participants overlap, and patterns of use of list correspondence take form in face-to-face settings

other than Branch meetings and 'formal' functions at National Conference, are unclear. Different players draw on threads of information – either as subscribers or in negotiation with players who are subscribers – in different and multiple ways. They may want to appease specific interests and needs for political and/or craft reasons, and feed some of this information back to the lists, either directly or indirectly through other players. The ways in which they do this depend on the networks they are moving in and on the nature of their connections with other players in beekeeping fora. Drawing on, and participating in, list discourses depends on the co-operative links they have with other players in order to get their work done.

While there are some fully-fledged commercial beekeepers subscribed to the 'NZBkprs' list, it is 'hobbyist' and semi-commercial beekeepers who regularly post contributions concerning the craft of beekeeping. This suggests that 'beekeepers' may compose the majority of 'silent' subscribers on the lists. Consequently, the information that is exchanged tends to be practical know-how tailored to small-scale operations, and to maximising enjoyment out of keeping bees. The above examples illustrate this. Hobbyists are more likely to own computers and to possess computer skills than their commercial counterparts. This is because beekeeping is not their predominant occupation. Not only do commercial beekeepers have less time to devote to computer technologies, they tend to be less endowed with appropriate skills to express themselves well through written language (see chapter one). Beekeepers engrossed in producing honey in local environments are, nevertheless, finding it increasingly difficult to be oblivious to the use of computer technologies in beekeeping.

Commercial beekeepers have greater densities and frequencies of ties with players ordering beekeeping through the National Association. The more apiaries they own, the greater their investment in the Association by way of levy and the greater their voting power. Strong ties tend to inhibit associations with other players possessing different ideas to one's own and enjoying differential access to information (Granovetter, 1982). They foster homogeneity and impede consideration of alternative and more 'efficient' ways of doing things. This means 'beekeepers' are less likely to form links with

'outside' players, and their participation in computer networks is inhibited: A long association with 'formal' processes means that these players do not need to rely on information transmitted on-line in order to extend their craft knowledge. For many, the National Association epitomises 'the industry' and fulfils a critical focal or reference point in their lives. Their identities and capacities in beekeeping are bound up with other players composing the NBA and with established ways of ordering beekeeping through 'official' channels.

For hobbyists and certain other players possessing distinct sets of skills to "those lifting the lids of beehives", on the other hand, membership to the 'NZBkprs' list may be their first point of contact with beekeeping. Their links with players in the NBA may be non-existent or limited, accounting for high levels of participation on the 'NZBkprs' list. Some may be members of local beekeeping clubs which have co-operative links with regional branches in their area, and may encounter their commercial counterparts at branch field-days or honey promotions. However, the fact that these players are embedded in 'unofficial' networks, and have 'weak' ties with players formally ordering beekeeping, places them in strategic positions to introduce fresh ideas and practices through computer technologies. This is because they are free from conventions operating with regard to commercial work. Having weak connections, consequently, secures greater room for manoeuvre and maximises access to different information.

## LOCAL AND GLOBAL DISCOURSES

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are upheld as bastions of a knowledge based economy. They at once create and appease "conditions of unprecedented knowledge intensity, uncertainty, ambiguity, and risk" that are associated with 'globalisation' (Nohria and Eccles, 1992:290). This is due to on-line relations being relatively fluid, de-centred, and flexible. Participants can communicate with a range of others simultaneously and on their own terms. In beekeeping, being able to foster links with others residing in remote geographical areas, means local and regional participants can hope

to achieve competitive market advantages through economies of *scope*, rather than economies of *scale*. Electronic networks are sufficiently malleable to accommodate and express shifting interests and needs of players, especially of packers, exporters, and marketers, in the evolving marketplace (Loader, 1997:7).

Indeed, correspondence on the beekeeping distribution lists reveals the rapid entry and exit of geographically dispersed players in 'threads' of conversation. Participation for individual players is often intermittent, and depends on the current round of issues being discussed. 'Threads' usually embroil a handful of participants exchanging messages back and forth regularly to each other, and invariably reproducing each other's postings in their own. This takes place for relatively short, yet intensive, periods of time. Participants are using the medium spasmodically in terms of their shifting interests and multiple capacities. In other words, they are drawing selectively on the lists to gain competitive advantages in the marketplace. This is in addition to the use of the distribution lists as a political tool to gain leverage in the National Association.

An unintended consequence of *global* information and communication technologies is the celebration of *local* scales of action (Calhoun, 1998; Loader, 1997). Individual participants are empowered to represent themselves and the *places* where they work in ways which are consistent with how they want to understand themselves and their work. This gives rise to notions of "enhanced participatory democratic activity" and to "new formulations of governance at the local level" (Calhoun, 1997:9). Far from undermining local scales of action, thus, the electronic-mail distribution lists can function to preserve and invigorate local idiosyncrasies, and this is of particular interest given regional variability in producing disparate beekeeping practices and shaping what can be produced by beekeepers. It is argued that the distribution lists facilitate links between players which are simultaneously embedded within and transcend geographical realms. These links are crucial for local players to market themselves and/or regionally derived products in the global marketplace. Players taking up opportunities presented by the global marketplace need to improvise with *local* resources – physical and

human – in order to capitalise on ideas, skills and knowledge possessed by others. Electronic networks are key mechanisms by which these ideas, skills and know-how can be expressed and transmitted.

It follows that players are able to tell stories via the distribution lists which develop and reinforce rhetorical devices that they are using to think about themselves, their contexts, and their work. This is at the same time as other locally embedded players are empowered to pursue similar strategies. Indeed, list postings are like “‘little narratives’ which invoke the creative, playful and self-defining validation of local discourse which has no reference to claims of external scientific universality” (Loader, 1997:8). The stories of list participants are distinct from those being exchanged by ‘beekeepers’ in local and regional settings, discussed in chapter one, because they are being told by actors possessing divergent interests and capabilities. Stories of this kind are empowered through computer technologies because of the absence of eye-ball to eye-ball contact. Their “performance consolidate[s] the ‘social bond’ of the [on-line] community” (Poster, 1995b:92, cited in Loader, 1997:8). In consequence, regions and *places* are re-worked in electronic networks through what individuals make known of their respective local/regional contexts, and this simultaneously constrains and enables what can be said and how it is told. How successful players are in representing themselves and their work on-line, though, is contingent upon other networks they are moving in affording face-to-face interaction.

The capacity to empower local (and regional) discourses through electronic networks presents significant ramifications for co-ordinating national scales of action via the National Association. Control and censorship of list correspondence is problematic because of the openness of electronic networks, and their vulnerability to ‘intruders’ and information overload (Wellman et al., 1996). As a producers’ association, the NBA is composed of ties between players that are based on trust/distrust and friendship/rivalry, and are constructed around shared notions of beekeeping in New Zealand. The possibility of global subscribers on the ‘NZBkprs’ list has been negotiated by list participants, and this ‘thread’ reveals the operation of nationalist sentiments and notions of collective identity on the part of subscribers. Thus,



the electronic networks are reinforcing the place of the National Association in beekeeping, at the same time as they are seen to threaten it.

In December, 1998, the list administrator sends a message to subscribers requesting feedback on whether or not to permit overseas players on the 'NZBkprs' list. The original intent of this list had been to provide "a place where NZ bkprs only can discuss NZ specific matters – politics, marketing, sales, crop etc". The list administrator notes that,

Its mainly, not so much the secrecy of it, just the boredom factor. You know, when you start talking about New Zealand crop and New Zealand conditions, I would rather not have people on the list suddenly say, 'well look I'm not really interested in that, lets talk about beekeeping in general', because it is a New Zealand beekeepers list set up to provide a New Zealand focus, but that doesn't mean a *secret New Zealand* (NZBkprs List, 18/12/98).

The subsequent formation of the 'NBA' list, nonetheless, has rendered it possible to expose the former list to greater 'outside' scrutiny and participation. The existence of this second list, pertaining to the National Association, is an important criteria for players supporting the inclusion of overseas subscribers (see below).

The list administrator believes that national control of the distribution lists is only a concern of players who are not actually subscribers. It may be that these players are trying to control the electronic networks by simply refusing to partake in them (Nohria and Berkley, 1994:352). On the 'Welcome to the NZ Beekeepers Distribution List' page, the list administrator advises new subscribers that it "is not an absolute assurance that the information [posted on the list] may not be forwarded out of New Zealand by someone off the list" (NZBkprs List, 1997). An active participant and wasp on both lists has also noticed that the 'effects' of the 'NZBkprs list' penetrate 'far beyond the 100 list members'. He comments that,

...the matters raised, or information provided here, become the topics of discussion amongst others who are not listers – or may not even have a computer! In our own company for example, I will often send a print-out or

raise a subject seen here to the smoko room for the rest of the staff...(NZBkprs List, 09/10/98).

The problem, if it is perceived to be one, relates to patterns of use of list correspondence by variously positioned players, and how these are shaped in 'real' settings.

The list administrator is grappling first-hand with the ways electronic networks simultaneously constrain and facilitate national control over participants and information (Wellman et al., 1996:213). He realises that his attempts to control and exert degrees of censorship over the lists are constantly being challenged and flouted. For instance, while he can make stipulations regarding membership criteria and list content, like requiring subscribers to be New Zealand residents and to use their real names, he cannot prevent subscribers passing on list correspondence to others players or accidentally posting private electronic-mail messages to the lists. He observes that,

...for all I know postings are automatically forwarded to people in Australia, Canada, and the US by people on the list....(t)he nature of email lists is such that people know that's the case....No email, even one-to-one, is any safer than a postcard. And if you start sending email to a distribution list its like sending money, postcards out to people who have a lot of people visiting their house and who might see the postcard some how or another. So there was never any intention to control the list as much as to provide the service with a certain amount of parameters (Interview, August, 1998).

The list administrator happens to be friends with a list administrator of an international beekeeping distribution list who he knows 'moderates' list messages:

So [first name of overseas list administrator] simply controls that. You know, he will zap quoted material. He might have to write in quite a lot, you know, referring to the recent blah, blah, blah... And if someone pulls up big long signature files...[he will] cut it down to one or two lines....Now that's control...and it is censorship. When they first determined that BEE-L was being

moderated, the words that suddenly came back were censorship, and it's not the same thing. Um, I *moderate* the discussions within my class in my teaching. I wouldn't call it *censorship*. It can be. It can be (Interview, August, 1998).

His account both embodies and expresses the problem of control. Moreover, he admits to *moderating* messages on the New Zealand lists in ways which facilitate the use of the medium and improve the understanding of users:

If I find something that I know is going to embarrass someone I would kill it, or I get back to them and say, did you mean for this to go, I'd be happy to let it go if you want me to....So *its getting people used to working with the medium*, you know, and there's a whole lot of different attitudes to it. Ah I'll mention a few names as we go. [Name of a wasp] is incredibly purposeful, you know, real clear thinking, but I think that [he] would be better to deal with, you know, I try to deal on screen, try to get my thoughts so that they appear on one screen if possible. Um [the wasp] responded to something that [another wasp] had written not long ago and commented, '[first name of wasp], you should leave a blank line between paragraphs because it all kind of runs together'. And that was pretty mechanical, pretty right. You know it does take people a while...And again, strictly [name of first wasp] should have written that to him one on one. You know, good list moderators try to keep the list on topic....If it was a totally moderated list you know that would have been scrapped....And once the traffic gets up I may end up running that law. You know, if there were fifteen messages a day coming in for the list and five of them were rubbish, I would tell the list I'm going to be doing this, but its perfectly normal (Interview, August, 1998).

There are divided responses from players on the issue of whether overseas subscriptions should be accepted. The responses reveal an array of interests and concerns, and can be used to illustrate the juncture of craft, scientific, and marketing discourses. Players opposing the intended course of action recognise and cite the role of *local* knowledge in shaping craft know-how and reflecting regional variability. These include 'public' players, like AAOs and Horticultural Research Scientists, who are concerned with facilitating disease control practices and imparting scientific knowledge to 'beekeepers'. The 'official' mandates of these players are embedded in local, regional and

national actions; although are increasingly subjected to global discourses in the current free-market environment:

*MAF Regulatory Authority:* I like the way the list has evolved into a small and personal discussion place. I agree...that making it international would destroy these characteristics....(I)f the industry here wants to provide information about the New Zealand situation, then maybe the solution would be for people here to be more active posting on the international lists that do exist (NZBkprs List, 23/12/98).

*Horticultural Research scientist:* There is already an international beekeeping list that we can all belong to....Better to stay with the NZ flavour (NZBkprs List, 23/12/98).

*Horticultural Research scientist:* ...our cosy NZ-only list is exactly what most of us want at the moment....I for one don't want to trawl through tons of emails each day to find the local ones that I'm interested in (NZBkprs List, 24/12/98).

'Hobbyists', and presumably commercial players who 'listen in' on list correspondence, have reservations about the quantity (and quality) of information they will receive if the 'NZBkprs' list is made accessible to overseas parties. Being able to reciprocate local knowledge and practical know-how are foremost in the minds of these players. They are hoping to find out what other beekeepers are doing and how they are faring in different regions. While the experiences and stories of overseas beekeepers might be fascinating, these are not seen as relevant to their own concerns. This also relates to the competitive ethos of players adhering to the rhetoric of "those who lift the lids of beehives" which happens to perpetuate an insular view of beekeeping:

*Commercial beekeeper:* Some beekeepers may refrain from writing in on some subjects if Overseas Beekeepers have access to the information (NBA List, 24/12/98).

*Marlborough beekeeper:* I think it would be very dangerous to let the world hear more about beekeeping in NZ...however this year has been so insane that...I

would be willing to live dangerously and vote YES....My only concern is...I don't want to be receiving 15 irrelevant messages per day from overseas beekeepers (NBA List, 22/12/98).

*Hobbyist:* The beauty of our list at the moment is that it provides a wonderful discussion group that all New Zealand beekeepers can take part in, yet not overload my mailbox. After all, I also have a life outside beekeeping and that results in enough mail as it is (NZBkprs List, 25/12/98).

*Otago beekeeper:* The idea of the list as a local only chat page has appeal, our "club" so to speak. Have guest speakers by all means, but do you want our club room door open to all? It could get a bit crowded in there and put off some of your members. Once it goes global (hey, I like that), is there any way of backtracking in the future if we think it is getting out of hand? (NZBkprs List, 23/12/98).

A Canterbury wasp also opposes overseas subscriptions. He exclaims that,

...people may modify what they say (write) if they think for example some other people in other countries may be "listening in". If so, we would not be getting their *true feelings/comments* and so this list in its existing form would lose something (NZBkprs List, 23/12/98; emphasis added).

Other players, who tend to be marketing oriented, favour the inclusion of overseas players. For example, the marketing consultant for the NBA happens to support the concept of having two lists: one international and one internal. This player performs a brokerage role in beekeeping and is strategically placed to participate and use both lists in fulfilling this role. He wants to generate and disseminate knowledge in order to create opportunities for local players. To this end, he has ties with national players, like fellow members of the marketing sub-committee, as well as with overseas players, like those in the American National Honey Board. He is often criticised by particular players for fostering links with overseas players as his 'official' mandate is marketing domestic honey. However, such links facilitate innovative courses of action through the National Association by securing access to different information and keeping pace with what global players are doing.

A Canterbury wasp, as a previous producer and now marketer, also advances reasons for allowing overseas subscribers on the 'NZBkprs' list:

*Canterbury wasp:* I think it would be a good source of information especially in the area of industry structure, research and marketing (ie indication of supply and demand). The other reasons it could be helpful is with Market access issues and area freedoms and residue testing. While on the subject of EU residue testing...(NZBkprs List, 21/12/98).

Other subscribers in favour include large-scale commercial beekeepers who may want to foster direct links with overseas players in order to market and export their crops:

*Canterbury beekeeper:* I think that it would be useful to open up the list to people based overseas (some of whom may be New Zealander's anyway) as they will probably generate some very useful discussion....This list has been very well managed (compared to some other lists I subscribe to) and since the NBA stuff was moved onto the other list, has been mostly very relevant. I don't know whether that is [the administrator's] guiding influence controlling everything, or whether beekeepers are too busy to waste time creating non-relevant messages (NZBkprs List, 21/12/98).

*Southland beekeeper:* Why not give it a go as new ideas and contributions are always welcome. The delete key gets rid of junk e-mail. Pity one couldn't get rid of the current dose of wet weather we are experiencing in the deep south at present...(NBA List, 22/12/98).

The 'consensus', as interpreted by the list administrator, is nevertheless for subscription to the 'NZBkprs' list to remain closed to players residing outside of New Zealand.

## FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

'Formal' position holders in beekeeping rely on controlling information and material available to 'the membership' through the *The New Zealand BeeKeeper*. This assures the preservation and integrity of formal roles and enables national players to carry out, relatively unimpeded, planned courses of action. The magazine has always been a significant forum for disseminating 'official' information to individuals and groups, especially grassroots players. It constitutes an alternative political tool for a range of players to communicate their interests and ideas to others. Indeed, for commercial beekeepers who do not regularly attend National Conference and are not list subscribers, the magazine may be their only link or interface with fellow beekeepers in remote regions and players devising national strategies.

Active participants on the distribution lists know of the value of the *The New Zealand BeeKeeper* in beekeeping, and are keen for it's role to be replaced or, at least, supplemented by electronic networks. This is rendered possible because computer technologies offer relatively speedy dissemination of up-to-date information: Information diffuses rapidly on-line where senders and receivers can communicate and collate snippets of information quickly and with equal ease (Wellman et al., 1996:216). Consequently, electronic networks are rendered superior to hardcopy versions, like the beekeeping journal, which are constrained by publication dates and cycles, editorial rules and 'prescribed' ways of doing things, costs of publication, and so on. Active participants are well positioned to put their ideas into practice by circumventing 'official' information flows using the distribution lists. Indeed, it has been observed on the lists that,

With the advent of email and faxes the need for a frequent magazine is largely gone. (Indeed it is probably high time most of the day to day communication to branch secretaries was done by e-mail...). My point is that eleven issues of the magazine is a luxury we can ill afford at the moment...(NZBkprs List, 12/07/98).

The list administrator has similarly noted that,

The role of the magazine is a major one that will certainly need redefinition. Given that the NBA uses the magazine primarily as a means of keeping membership \*informed\*, and given the fact that it is a net drain on financial resources, we should certainly be looking at ways of (1) improving the degree and timeliness of communication and (2) reducing costs! (NBA List, 03/02/99).

A person 'defamed' in the beekeeping journal, for example, has to wait one month before presenting his/her version of the story to the readership in the following edition. During this time, the representation of facts that are purportedly against him or her become cemented in the minds of readers and are less readily displaced by subsequent assertions. By comparison, misunderstandings and/or mis-representations on-line can be rectified more quickly, although, it has already been suggested, not as instantaneously or straightforwardly as in face-to-face encounters. The distribution lists allow words, sentences, and paragraphs of previous postings to be literally pulled out and reproduced in subsequent postings for translation and interpretation. This means participants can re-create contextual cues for the benefit of other players. Subscribers immediately know what is being referred to and can observe the ways it is being re-presented, challenged or reinforced. Long list postings reproducing previous messages partially or in full before, at the end of, or intermingled with the 'new' text, illustrate this. These messages convey that "(a) good portion of the discussion must be devoted to messages about messages, supplementary information to supply what is ordinarily embedded in the context of speech" (Nohria and Eccles, 1992:296). Hence, particular players prefer to post messages on the distribution lists instead of, or in addition to, responding in the beekeeping journal.

In another example, which illustrates distinct yet overlapping uses of both mediums, the President of the Bay of Plenty Branch writes to the 'NBA' list, in September 1998, relating how an article he has written for the New Zealand Beekeeper has been refused publication. The Chairman of the Publications Committee has informed him that in order for the letter to be published he has to reword it and reduce it to approximately 350 words:



It will not be printed as an article because it is not an article. It is an opinion, and as such should be in the Correspondence column. This is a decision of the publications Committee (reproduced on NBA List, 29/09/98).

The Branch President seeks 'additional *opinions*' from list subscribers on this issue. He also advises that another list posting he made in relation to the same issue was reproduced as a Letter to the Editor in the beekeeping journal without his knowledge and consent.

The ensuing discussions provoke reflexivity as to the purpose(s) of the beekeeping magazine, and create interest in developing a set of editorial 'rules'. It is hoped to promote consistency and foster accountability in decisions of the Publications Committee. The episode illustrates ways in which formal processes are reworked by on-line communications substituting for, and expediting, traditional forms of communication. It also reveals how national players regard electronic networks as 'illegitimate' means of communication: They are prepared to post 'articles' on the lists which are prohibited from publication in the beekeeping journal. In this way, they are allowing specific issues to be thrashed out on the distribution lists to reinforce or reproduce the 'contentious' reputation of electronic networks and the uses to which they can be put.

A wasp promptly replies to the Branch President, describing the situation as 'unbelievable'. He retorts,

On the basis of that "ruling" given to you...most of the articles which appeared in the last "Beekeeper"...would all be relegated to the Correspondence column. They all contain OPINIONS – in one form or another (NBA List, 29/09/98).

The list administrator, knowing of the content of the Branch President's letter, also posts a message where he exclaims,

It seems that each time a new rule is needed to avoid a particular piece of criticism, it will be created ad hoc (NBA List, 30/09/98).

At around this point the Chairman of the Publication's Committee faxes the Branch President directly, requesting him to reproduce his article for publication on the 'NBA' list. He want list subscribers to comment on it 'for the balance'. The facsimile is copied on the 'NBA' list by a fellow Executive member, who is also a member of the Publications Committee:

It is unfortunate that we do seem to be communicating in a negative way but, I do not apologise for that because, it means I can talk to you and get your point of view. If we do not get any comments on what we do or say then something is wrong (reproduced on NBA List, 05/10/98).

Another 'wasp' reiterates the desirability of freedom of speech in 'our own magazine'. He 'can't see what all the fuss is about' and comments that,

One could argue for some editorial editing, perhaps on the more personal comments as long as this was acknowledged, and perhaps that portion of the article appears more as "letter to the editor" stuff. The personal comments don't seem to be defamatory and are presented in a conciliatory manner....*For those criticised there is always the opportunity to explain their actions by way of reply. Being open to public scrutiny goes with the job of public office, and a good thing too* (NBA List, 04/10/98).

The above examples reveal the overlap of official and unofficial means of communication in beekeeping. The use of the distribution lists in conjunction with the beekeeping journal by players differently positioned in beekeeping prompts the creative use of both mediums. Put another way, the communication mediums play off each other in ways which reinforce and strengthen their respective attributes. The following discussions illustrate how two key administrative players – the list administrator and the current Executive Secretary – selectively draw on the respective mediums. This is done in response to each other's strategies, and in ways which at once reflect and appease their 'audiences'. Both players are wanting to assume credible positions in order to espouse the 'truth' and enforce their own objectivity or neutrality in beekeeping. In other words, the forms of communication represent alternative political tools for these players. The mediums empower their disparate ordering strategies through rendering them more or less visible

to other players. However, the use of either medium can operate as an asset or as a liability for the players, presenting unintended or unforeseen contingencies, and possibly giving rise to fortuitous circumstances for 'the other side'.

### The List Administrator

The list administrator regularly posts 'inflammatory' letters on the distribution lists to stimulate or 'fire up' threads of conversation on particular issues. This is at odds with his attempts to 'moderate' the lists, but illustrates how he selectively draws on them as political tools to further particular interests in beekeeping. For example, he often posts messages questioning the competency of the current Executive Secretary and/or the actions of Executive players. On one occasion, in his capacity as Secretary of the Bay of Plenty Branch, the administrator complains on the 'NBA' list and in the beekeeping journal of the time it is taking for the minutes of the 1998 Annual Meeting at National Conference to be distributed to branches. He plays on the slogan of the NBA by adding a phrase,

"Better beekeeping, better marketing, *better communication*" (NBA List, 26/12/98).

The issue of the minutes is contentious for players. On the floor of National Conference itself considerable time was devoted in order to correct the minutes of the previous Conference in Nelson before players, like wasps, would accept them as a 'true and correct' record. The minutes did indeed contain errors, and it was insinuated that this was due to incompetence on the part of the Executive Secretary. The episode depicts how players are vying for meaning and control in relation to 'official' records of events. It becomes a struggle for, and an exercise of, censorship on the part players involved. The delay in receiving the 1998 minutes happens to fuel speculation concerning their quality and accuracy, and discussions cut across both channels of information exchange.

The reproduction of the minutes on the 'NBA list' is also being negotiated at this time, and their circulation on the list will be a twin-edged sword: In order to embrace and exercise 'control' of on-line communications, formal position holders must use the list to circulate 'official' correspondence. By doing so, however, they are exposing that correspondence to rigorous scrutiny on the part of 'wasps' in ways that publication in the journal does not make possible. On the other hand, 'wasps', and particularly the list administrator, may lose their autonomy and room for manoeuvre if formal players do embrace the NBA list for formal procedures and practices. Yet, in order to secure pivotal positions in beekeeping they must take this risk.

The list administrator also uses the distribution lists to induce other players to carry out highly visible and 'predictable' lines of action. He is arguably well-placed to endeavour to manipulate how specific players use the lists through knowledge he has gleaned in face-to-face interaction. The following example, however, reveals in practice that he possesses little control over whether players choose to deal with particular issues on-line or interpersonally, or not at all (Nohria and Eccles, 1992:297). A few months after the 1998 National Conference, the President of the Bay of Plenty Branch posts a message to the 'NBA' list. The player is seeking to "get a discussion underway about a future NBA structure", and wants this discussion to take place via the distribution lists. He endeavours to place a resolution to this effect before a forthcoming Executive meeting. A formal proposal, presented by Bay of Plenty players at Conference as a series of rule changes to restructure the National Association, had been unsuccessful. The list administrator as Secretary of the Branch and also one of its delegates at Conference played a pivotal role in representing the proposal to other players. The Branch President exclaims,

Our current Executive has not found it necessary to establish a committee to look at structural changes. That's why in my view we should have a nationwide (membershipwide) forum to discuss this and inform the membership timely *before next Conference*. In my view we should have say a 'Forum by Email' to do the brainstorming. The BOP proposal could be a starting point but doesn't have to be (NBA List, 15/11/98).

The resolution is rejected by 'the Executive' pursuant to Standing Order procedures because it purportedly arrives too late for the Executive meeting. This obliges the Branch President to pursue his agenda through the beekeeping journal, in addition to postings on the list. When he receives a belated reply from an Executive member by standard mail he forwards this to the list. The Executive player has advised:

By all means fire up discussion over the Email network. I copy anything that may be of interest to those Exec members without access to Email so all have the opportunity to see what is being said and by whom....Perhaps you should get something into the journal as soon as possible so as to broaden the audience and give all a chance to take part (reproduced on NBA List, 18/12/98).

In a further posting, the Branch President offers his thoughts on how such an electronic-mail forum could proceed. He suggests that "perhaps we better consider first why we have a NBA and why we should have one in the future. He proceeds to identify what he sees as the main 'unifying forces for the whole industry' (NBA List, 17/12/98).

At this point, the list administrator purports to "look[ing] forward to a lively, well-informed and enthusiastic debate on the issues that [the Branch President] has raised". He uses the opportunity to question the actions of Executive players, and demonstrates experiential knowledge of Standing Order procedures as past President and Executive member. He writes,

It seems to me that they [the Executive] did not want to deal with it, and I think I personally would have preferred that they simply said that. Hiding behind a misrepresentation of the Standing Orders to avoid talking about an important issue is not the way to go... (NBA List, 18/12/98).

A semi-commercial beekeeper is the only subscriber who responds to the Branch President. This player draws attention to the complexity of the proposed task and puts into context the Branch President's concerns:

We are just going through a testing time at present which is causing individuals to question whether the body is worth preserving and does it provide the services we are looking for. Some are looking at what they are paying and saying they are not getting value for money. Perhaps forgetting what it was like 20 years ago when everything was given to us on a plate and we had to take the price offered by the one buyer. Things have changed a lot since the introduction of user-pays.

I believe the NBA is worth preserving. We just have to get over these little problems we face today - mainly financial (NBA List, 18/12/98).

The list administrator attributes a lack of response to timing as it happens to be the busiest time of the year for 'beekeepers'. He subsequently tries a number of different tacks over the ensuing months in order to instigate discussion:

Let's keep the thoughts coming on the role of the NBA, OK?

Here, to keep it going, are the 'Objects and Power of the NBA, taken from the rules. Do they seem relevant? Are they wide enough? Too wide? (NBA List, 26/12/98).

However, his attempts are unsuccessful, and he ultimately resorts to a confrontational approach:

I'm doing this as a means of expressing my own attitudes, philosophies, hopes, motivations as they relate to the beekeeping industry.

I am accused by some who are 'commercial beekeepers' of having a suspect motivation because I am not working full time in beekeeping any more. Hence, according to some, my motivations must be derived from pure ego or something even more sinister.

Over the next few weeks, I'm going to raise a few more specific aspects and issues and tell you what \*I\* really think of them....Maybe I can drag some opinions and feelings out of some of the rest of you in doing it, too - and that can only be for the good of the industry (NBA List, 31/01/99).

He begins by suggesting possible areas for consideration:

Good Executives, bad Executives, good Presidents, bad Presidents, good admin, bad admin - I'd like to see the NBA established in such a way that it is driven by \*policy\*, that it expresses a continued and developed \*philosophy\* that is created and maintained by its membership, rather than expressing the viewpoint of the officers and admin of the day... (NBA List, 31/01/99).

A wasp subsequently responds to the list administrator, and he points out that a 'formal' process called 'industry planning' was put into action during the mid 1980s:

We (the NBA) used to have a system exactly like that [first name of list administrator] - it was called "Industry Planning"! The annual consideration of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the "industry" from the NBA's viewpoint provided a blueprint for the year ahead....

Industry Planning always received criticism from some quarters just because it could NOT predict every possible contingency, and this same minority suggested it was a waste of time and resources to even make the effort. In recent years we have witnessed a gradual and at times deliberate withdrawal from this formalised planning structure for the NBA. The results have meant a less pro-active and more re-active organisation, and the consequences of that attitude are bearing down upon us now (NBA List, 01/02/99).

The issue of restructuring the NBA consequently dies out as more pressing issues, like proposed imports of Western Australia honey to New Zealand and market access stipulations of 'buyers' in the European Union, fire prolonged threads of conversation. Hence, the episode illustrates a number of ways in which the list administrator loses control: In practice, he enjoys little control over the use of the lists by other players, and this frustrates his own use of the medium as a political tool. The episode also illustrates the ephemeral character of list discourses.

### The Executive Secretary

In response to the list administrator's attempts to discredit him, the Executive Secretary selectively draws on the distribution lists in conjunction with the *The New Zealand Beekeeper* to enforce his own game plan. This further

obliges the list administrator to use both mediums by compiling standard-mail letters for publication in the beekeeping journal, as well as for distribution on the lists. The current Executive Secretary uses his formal capacity as Editor of the beekeeping magazine to perpetrate a private feud with the list administrator. Because the journal epitomises how communication has previously been done in beekeeping, it boasts a wider audience. This allows the Executive Secretary to make representations in the magazine that are taken-for-granted and perceived as legitimate by a broad range of players, especially 'beekeepers'. Beekeepers accord greater accuracy to what appears in the journal as this is equated with 'official' processes in beekeeping. Once something is put into print and published in the journal it at once gains credence and authority. The list administrator similarly uses the electronic networks to extend his 'audience'; although he does not have history and the 'power of the membership' behind him.

Furthermore, the nature of the journal medium permits the Executive Secretary to be both discrete and anonymous, whereas the list administrator comes across as opinionated and outspoken. It has already been mentioned that on-line communications "encourage people to communicate more freely and creatively than they do in person" (Wellman, et al, 1996:218). Whilst the list administrator tends to address the Executive Secretary personally in list correspondence, the Executive Secretary maintains a professional semblance by signing all correspondence in his official capacities and frequently referring to himself in the third person pronoun. As a *formal* player, his actions are largely beyond reproach on the part of 'beekeepers', and his informal game strategies are, consequently, less visible. This contrasts with strategies of the list administrator which appear unequivocal in the eyes of 'beekeepers', and expose him to greater scrutiny and attack.

For some time, the Executive Secretary was the only 'formal' player who subscribed to the 'NZBkprs list'. This worked as a strategy on his part to exert some control and censorship over the computer technologies. By acting as a gatekeeper, he could hope to manage the flow of information available to fellow national players concerning the distribution lists. He could also attempt to control information being made available to subscribers on the lists in



relation to formal processes. When the list administrator was notified of the Executive Secretary's intention to unsubscribe, however, he was irked into posting two scathing messages on the lists expressing his disappointment. Two elected members of 'the Executive' at the 1998 Conference (one of whom has since resigned) remain subscribers to the distribution lists. Both players happened to be list subscribers prior to their elections to office. At the time of writing, they were tentatively embracing the electronic networks for specific 'official' communications. This suggests that the Executive Secretary's withdrawal from the lists has facilitated, rather than impeded, the uptake of computer technologies by formal players.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the development of electronic-mail distribution lists in beekeeping as political tools for players with particular sets of skills and competencies. 'Public' players were the first to subscribe to the beekeeping distribution lists presumably due to professional networks requiring the use of computers or rendering on-line communications relatively accessible to them. Players adhering to the rhetoric of "those who lift the lids of beehives", on the other hand, have been disinclined to take up computer technologies because of their strength of ties with the National Association and alternative accesses to information. These players are also less likely to express themselves in written form. By comparison, the distribution lists represent 'new' resources for wasps and hobbyist beekeepers, empowered through written representations, to generate fresh ideas and innovative strategies for ordering beekeeping via the National Association. The lack of participation by beekeepers, however, shapes the use of the electronic networks by these other players and reinforces the need for face-to-face interaction in beekeeping, especially for regional branch meetings and during National Conference.

It has been argued that the advent of computer technologies has invigorated, rather than displaced, official settings composing the National

Association. The distribution lists are contingent upon the formal organisation and official processes; yet cannot be mapped entirely over these. 'List activists', for example, require official fora and the co-operation of formal position holders to carry out lines of action instructed on-line, as well as to provide answers and resolutions to questions and issues that they collectively raise. On the other hand, on-line discourses encourage resourcefulness and ingenuity in ordering beekeeping through aiding certain players to critique formal roles and official procedures via informal and unconventional channels. These players are empowered through electronic networks to petition for greater accountability on the part of existing formal position holders in ways not previously possible.

It has also been demonstrated how the distribution lists afford multiple uses for players possessing diverse capacities and shifting interests in beekeeping. The lists allow for different uses on the part of variously positioned players. For example, silent subscribers can act as invisible bridges between sources of information negotiated on-line and exchanged in 'real' settings. By contrast, active participants, like packers, exporters, and marketers, regularly make use of the lists as marketing initiatives and to create competitive advantages. Their actions are highly visible and also help foster a sense of on-line community based on informal ties of trust and reciprocity. Participating on-line is primarily a means by which these players seek to maintain strategic positions in beekeeping and to represent themselves as critical players in the de-regulated environment. Other participants, like the NBA's marketing consultant, endeavour to carry out formal roles and responsibilities via the distribution lists, and attempt to muster credibility for their work in this way. At the same time, the distribution lists are being appropriated by hobbyist and semi-commercial beekeepers as a means of extending craft knowledge with other grassroots players in remote geographical areas.

It follows that a range of players are re-ordering beekeeping through drawing on the electronic-mail distribution lists in ways which capitalise on their specific skills, knowledge, and experiences in beekeeping. Participating on-line renders control on the part of national position holders harder to

secure because control becomes de-centralised. However, on-line communications also unlock improved ways of administering the craft of beekeeping via the National Association. This is partly attributable to notions of collective identity espoused by list participants resurrecting nationalist sentiments and confirming a need for *national* control in beekeeping. The distribution lists recompose a diversity of interests and capacities on the part of players involved with New Zealand beekeeping, and at once dissolve and recreate tensions between particular individuals and groups. Relations sustained 'on-line' cut across and reshape formal and categorical identities of players constituting the NBA, as well as the rhetorical devices these players use to represent themselves as 'inside' players in beekeeping.

## CONCLUSION

It was argued in the thesis that products reaching the marketplace are joint products of networks of producers, packers, marketers, and so on co-operating with each other. The work performed by each of these players is critical for the work performed by others and for the products ultimately created and recreated (Becker, 1982:35). 'Beekeepers' produce local products, and these products are handled and re-presented by a range of players immersed in local, regional and national scales of operation who also have links with global actors. Consequently, the players have interests and capacities which increasingly cut across scales of action, while tending to be privileged locally because of the nature of commercial beekeeping work. Beekeepers harbour a conception of their own work as producing quality end-products, and this conception is progressively displaced by the work performed by others. There has previously been no mechanism placing a value on marketing know-how (or knowledge) in beekeeping. This is because beekeepers adhering to the rhetoric of "those who lift the lids of beehives" like to measure in quantities and in terms of tangible outputs.

The thesis revealed, nonetheless, that resources in beekeeping, including ideas and know-how, can be at once local, regional and national products. This means for players wanting to secure competitive positions in the global marketplace, beekeepers' products are in a form which can be mobilised for any situation (Stark, 1996:17). They can be redefined and recombined in multiple ways through being flexible in how those assets are ordered. In this way, players are able to exploit contexts of uncertainty in global markets, including uncertainty with whom they will do business in the future (Stark, 1996:22). It was shown how these processes are presently reconfiguring relations between individuals and groups in and across the various settings, and of the significance of shifting relations between packers and producers in regional contexts. Packers and producers have different

criterion for performing their work which are reshaped in the context of free trade.

Producers and packers develop unique and specialised perceptions of honey varieties to fit the requirements of their work. Producers, for example, desire maximum output from their hives and the highest possible prices for their produce. They endeavour to produce quality honey and gauge this in light of the conditions and constraints posed by the season. Packers, on the other hand, need to constantly strive for unique, value-added products and to ensure that these are competitively priced to penetrate markets. They are more concerned with, for example, differentiating floral sources on the basis of honey colour and taste, and with medicinal properties of particular honey varieties and hive products. Packers want to pack and market standardised bee products to fit market stipulations and product specifications. To this end, they may 'sabotage' a beekeeper's product through rejecting it outright or choosing to blend it with other products supplied to them in a bid for consistency (Becker, 1982). Moreover, while producers claim expertise in determining honey varieties through observing and understanding bee foraging behaviour; packers may increasingly contest particular honey varieties on the basis of chemical analyses. This is likely to be in addition to the use of bodily senses, and reveals the similarity with wine vintages.

In the past an oligopoly of large-scale, specialist packers represented significant outlets for beekeepers to dispose of their honeys domestically and overseas. These entities also co-ordinated marketing activities, and enforced a distinction between *production* and *distribution* in beekeeping. Certain players are forecasting a return to one or two significant packers in the present de-regulated environment, and this trend is signalled by the actions of the Canterbury wasps who recently disbanded their production activities. The strength of co-operative ties between producers and packers, though, and the prevalence of the do-it-yourself rhetoric on the part many 'beekeepers', often means the same person attempts both capacities.

The thesis postulated that regional scales of action are likely to be invigorated and assume increasing significance as marketing tools. This is

because *regional variability* in beekeeping becomes a source of strength in the global marketplace for differentiating products and securing competitive advantages. As local environments become associated with particular honey varieties and specialist hive by-products, products will become standardised or, at least, marketed on the basis of local/regional properties. Being able to co-ordinate such activities requires greater recognition of local idiosyncrasies and input through regional branches. Consequently, local players in regional settings need to foster greater autonomy in their relations with national players. It also follows that national strategies need to be sufficiently flexible and malleable to empower *regions* to become points of leverage in shifting networks or configurations of players. Indeed, the focus switches from securing control over national strategies to empowering regional activities. There is already recognition by players that national scales of action rest on strength at grassroots level and that 'progress' will not be achieved unless regional branches are 'lively'. However, this takes on 'new' dimensions in the de-regulated environment.

It was illustrated in the Canterbury Branch case that regional branches are struggling to realise greater autonomy vis-à-vis each other and the national body in the contemporary environment. The remits produced by Canterbury players revealed that members with marketing and export orientations would prefer to have a separate secretary for the specialist sub-committees in order to preserve their independence from national position holders. This highlighted the uncertain relationship between 'the Executive' and the national sub-committees it creates. Membership on national sub-committees is a means by which 'wasps' further their special interests, especially where, as a group, they are not currently occupying formal positions. At a minimum, the Executive Secretary needed to perform in ways which accommodated and expressed the particular interests of these players, as distinct from the interests of producers.

Successful remits at National Conference acted only as *recommendations* to 'the Executive' because this preserved the integrity and freedom of national position holders to pursue policies perceived to be in the *national* interest. While branch remits, like the Canterbury Branch levy remit,

drew attention to regional variability and the state of power relations in regional settings, the object was to assimilate difference and to average out grassroots interests. This meant that remits could present unintended contingencies for both locally-embedded players and national position holders. The Executive Secretary's task was to co-ordinate local and regional resources as *national* resources, and this entailed enforcing a sense of national or 'industry' identity. The NBA's generic marketing consultant also operates to exploit *national* resources by accommodating to the highest common denominator. Manuka honey, for example, is still being rigorously promoted at the same as disgruntled beekeepers complain their needs are not being addressed as these needs are tied to particular localities. Therefore, the concept of a generic marketing body in beekeeping remains controversial simply because of a tension between *local* conditions and *national* stipulations. It was shown that, as a consequence of this tension, particular individuals and groups desire to transform ways of ordering beekeeping at the national level. This resulted in reflexive appraisal and re-negotiation of conventional understandings based on *production* work.

Each chapter comprising this thesis represented a distinct forum turning on this problem of organising the craft of beekeeping. It was argued that each forum embroiled different, yet overlapping, sets of participants negotiating and ordering their interests vis-à-vis each other. The chapters denoted contexts for players to create, challenge and reshape co-operative links they have with each other in order to perform their work. It was through their interaction in and across the various settings that players enacted and recomposed what they collectively witnessed as organisational structures regulating or guiding their relations. Consequently, words like organisation, structure and industry have been treated in the thesis as shorthand for the notion of networks of people and materials co-operating to produce things (Becker, 1982). These networks constantly evolve because players have shifting interests and multiple capacities. Thus, words like organising and ordering were used to capture the fluidity of what took place.

The thesis sought to illuminate on-going processes by which players both made sense of each other and attempted to lever control in beekeeping.

Their strategies cut across and reshaped the formal roles and categorical identities attributed to others. Similarly they were contingent upon the entry of 'newcomers' in the fields and the changing situational factors posing different opportunities and constraints for players. It was argued that rules and regularities defining each of the games are contestable, and this was exemplified through disparate ordering strategies of individuals and groups, especially in regional Branch meetings and proceedings at National Conference. These ordering strategies were rhetorical effects of how players understood their particular interests and needs in beekeeping in relation to the interests and needs assigned to others.

Chapter one recounted ways in which successful beekeepers accumulated detailed knowledge of the local areas where they kept bees across time, and how this knowledge assisted them to know how to handle their bees in different conditions and to predict what those conditions might be. To this end, a distinction was made between knowledge of beekeeping practice which applies regardless of the geographical areas in which bees are kept, and knowledge which encapsulates "a wide array of practical skills and acquired intelligence in responding to a constantly changing natural and human environment" (Scott, 1998:313). This latter form of knowledge was labelled *local* knowledge (or beekeeping *metis*), and is tacit knowledge embodied in a set of resources which beekeepers draw on and reassemble on-site when working with their bees. Being attuned to *local* conditions helped combat the uncertainties implicit in doing beekeeping work and being at the mercy of the elements. Intimacy with, for example, cycles of germinating flora, weather patterns, and local farming practices is crucial in commercial beekeeping work.

The chapter also identified a rhetoric of independence and self-sufficiency deployed by 'beekeepers' to represent themselves and the work they perform in beekeeping. It contemplated ways in which this rhetoric is challenged through ties of interdependence with other players whom beekeepers encounter in local settings, such as farmers, spraying contractors, and bank managers; as well as with players, like Apicultural Advisory Officers (AAOs) and Horticultural Research Scientists, whose work also presents



constraints and opportunities for the work performed by beekeepers. Different players, including 'public' players and 'wasps', draw on the rhetoric of "those who lift the lids of beehives" to demonstrate a competency in beekeeping and to stake a claim as 'inside' players. Subsequent chapters revealed how this played out in and across beekeeping fora. The players struggled to impose specific interests and to act out multiple capacities in order to have a recognised ability to tell the 'truth' about the state of the games and, thereby, to exercise control over *national* strategies.

Chapter two revealed that confrontation and conflict between individuals and groups were ripe at National Conference because the various meeting contexts composing the national field pulled together, and rendered highly visible, disparate ordering strategies. For example, list discourses aided in forcing a distinction between 'formal' and 'informal' practices of different players. This induced a stalemate situation, reflected in the rejection of all four levy resolutions at the Special meeting. Financial reports and figures had been posted on the distribution lists prior to Conference, in addition to 'official' information being made available through formal position holders. The use of such material by 'wasps' sparked an ambiguous situation because players were suddenly confronted with conflicting information. Meeting face-to-face at Conference intensified the ambiguity and compelled the majority of players to cling to the status quo as a semantic bulwark offering protection and delivering clarity in their relations (Dalton, 1959:234).

In other words, knowledge negotiated on the distribution lists fuelled suspicion of 'official' processes, yet paradoxically reinforced the value of 'formal' processes and what was supposedly at stake. At the 1999 National Conference, the issue of a levy increase was able to be thoroughly and reasonably considered by a different set of players, resulting in a levy increase authorised by 'the membership'. Through conflict and previous struggles in the national field, the players had become better positioned to combat uncertainty and to contemplate future changes in their shared environments (Stark, 1996:4). These processes facilitated the flow of information and allowed for greater transparency. Thus, it was argued that conflict ultimately induced positive consequences of drawing attention to inefficiencies in

established practices, and for effecting novel and more efficient ways of devising national strategies.

Constant points of order, calls for clarification, confusion as to what was being discussed and who had speaking rights, uncertainty regarding motions being voted on and which ones had been lost, and so on characterised National Conference. It was through such dilemmas that inadequacies and inconsistencies in written rules and prescribed procedures were constantly brought to light. Individuals and groups had opportunities to clarify and/or modify their own thinking on strategic issues, and others opposing their arguments had incentives to advance counter strategies. Confrontation and conflict of this type "keeps open a multiplicity of alternative paths to further exploration" (Stark, 1996:2).

The practice of ordering beekeeping through conflict also prompted accountability in the performance of players and continuity of struggles via 'official' channels. Conflict tended to unite players against common foes by exposing points of agreement and matters of common interest. This reinforced shared beliefs in the value of the game(s) and the benefits of having a *National Association*. Indeed, players who failed to comprehend that organising is about 'flows, changes and processes' tended to become 'immobilized, defensive, and angry' because they saw problems that could be solved once and for all, and tasks, responsibilities, and roles which could be perfectly performed (Weick, 1995:187). These players pursued 'formalist' strategies and emphatically opposed informal processes because, "(b)eyond...trite merits of providing ...communication channels and fixing responsibility, [formal processes are a] sure avenue of exchange between enemies in the [Association], as well as the bar to entry of undesirables" (Dalton, 1959:234;237). The processes aided players to mutually define and recognise immanent laws regulating their relations; although, at times, blinded them to the fact that informal processes are also implicit in the game(s). Resorting to what they understood as 'the rules' in situations of conflict, ambiguity and uncertainty was a sensemaking strategy used by some players to restore what they perceived as order and clarity in their relations.

Struggles in the national field to determine who or what group possessed the greatest 'common-sense', exemplified attempts by individuals and groups to project their own objectivity or neutrality in the field. These tactical manoeuvres are inherent aspects of any field of play. Together, the players' concerted actions recreated the benefits and stakes on offer. Effective players, especially those occupying formal positions, learned to successfully juggle conflicting loyalties to individuals and groups with what had previously been negotiated in the field as formal processes. As Dalton has argued:

(R)easonable compromise calls for courage and insight. Courage in facing the complications of *not* fitting absolute meanings to vague situations and shifting commitments; insight in knowing what items of policy to concede without destroying core principles. To sanctify either formal or informal approaches to the exclusion of the other...is immoral and overlooks the fact that *the very rules and principles being fought over are products of compromise* (Dalton, 1959:245, emphasis added).

Certain players, like life members and Branch delegates, were seen to have possessed particular competencies which allowed them to more effectively or less visibly bridge the disparate ordering strategies of others.

Chapter three disclosed what happened when Canterbury players assembled in branch meetings to formulate and vote on remits. Local branch meetings draw out the discourses of players differently positioned across local and national scales of action. Pitted against each other, these players articulated their respective concerns and renegotiated mutual understandings of beekeeping in Canterbury. Consequently, the chapter explored ways in which the rhetorical devices of sets of players intersected, evolved, or faced extinction in particular meeting contexts (Law, 1994). Most significantly, it unveiled the dominance of marketing and business discourses espoused by 'Canterbury wasps' who move in different networks to other branch players and, thus, who have access to different information. These players selectively imparted information to others through narrative strategies which at once refined their interests and goals and shaped how other players perceived their own interests and goals. The wasps' strategies were, however, also shaped by

rhetorical devices deployed by fellow branch players to represent themselves and to express their own objectivity or neutrality in the field.

The analysis revealed how branch remits presented for National Conference can be significantly moulded by players espousing list discourses in regional settings. However, the penetration of list discourses in 'real' settings worked both ways, and had unintended consequences for 'list activists'. It at once enabled and constrained the flow of information to grassroots players concerning official processes and the performance of formal roles by existing role occupants. When Executive players were present in Canterbury Branch meetings, for example, a level of conflict inevitably resulted, yet overlapping discourses were a crucial balancing or mediating force. Conflict ensured that 'beekeepers' heard different stories, and also enabled the wasps to devise counter-strategies in response to the actions of Executive players. Overlapping discourses, or multiple 'audiences', were also the key at National Conference. Here, alternative ordering strategies of players differently positioned across beekeeping fora came to light. This produced a realisation on the floor of Conference that the two Canterbury remits concerning the Executive Secretary and Editor were unproductive for 'the membership'.

The Canterbury Branch's levy remit drew attention to the difficulties of levying an activity increasingly shaped by an array of interests and needs on the part of practitioners. At the time the apiary based levy system was devised, players responsible argued that it was set in motion with the passing of the Commodity Levies Act 1990. In actuality, this Act provided an opportunity for these players to effect a different system by which levies could be extracted from NBA members. It was especially lucrative from the point of view of players who wanted to conserve a marketing component to the levy in order that marketing activities of the NBA, co-ordinated through the marketing sub-committee, continue. This is why the Canterbury wasps scrutinised the performance of the Executive Secretary who was seen to consume money that could be devoted to marketing. The timing of the legislation was crucial because it also coincided with plans for the American Foulbrood National Pest Management Strategy which needed a guaranteed source of funding. The PMS

is regarded as a market growth strategy by players with marketing and exporting orientations.

For government players at the time, the Commodity Levies legislation was designed to allow 'primary industries' *certainty* of funding in order to carry out activities like research, product promotion, and market development (NZ Parliamentary Debates, 1995, Vol. 551:10521). The legislation was intended to foster accountability for 'industry' players and to eliminate 'free-loading'. In beekeeping, however, it was shown how accountability has actually been eroded. Discontentment with the new system, especially on the part of 'beekeepers' (or producers), fuelled counter-strategies to minimise and evade levy payments; thereby, evading *national* accountability. The ability of local players to work around *national* requirements has, however, become problematic with the lowering of the commercial threshold. Local players were called into account by fellow grassroots players in regional settings. Nevertheless, for national position holders the process of collecting levies was rendered more precarious. This was aggravated by 'beekeepers', like those in Canterbury, who contested generic marketing activities and the proportion of the commodity levy being used to support these activities.

Chapter four contemplated the use of electronic-mail distribution lists by players with particular sets of skills and competencies. Patterns of use revealed how relations of trust and reciprocity between participants fostered a sense of on-line community. This community had implications for the National Association as a counter or shadow organisation. However, it was argued that rather than substituting for physical co-presence, on-line relations were more likely to invigorate 'real' settings and to re-affirm the place of face-to-face relations in beekeeping. Other players, like wasps, utilised the distribution lists as political tools. Their success at mustering control over national strategies was contingent upon their performance in face-to-face settings, securing credibility in the eyes of 'beekeepers', as well as on the use of 'the lists' by 'beekeepers' and formal position holders.

The active participation of 'wasps' on the distribution lists has secured a place for computer technologies in beekeeping. The electronic networks

illustrated 'informal' ordering strategies provoked by ties of trust and reciprocity between these players in 'real' settings. In the national setting, by contrast, the wasps preferred to follow 'the rules' and to critique the actions of formal players whom they viewed as drawing on informal ties of friendship. The distribution lists afforded a new resource for wasps, like 'public' players and hobbyist beekeepers, to capitalise on pre-existing relations with each other, as well as to extend relations with different players involved with beekeeping. The distribution lists, therefore, fulfilled a purpose for these players that was similar to the way in which National Conference enabled Executive players, as a group, to act on informal ties with each other in performing their 'formal' roles. This revealed that 'informal' relations are necessary products of membership and affiliations to tight-knitted groups. The distribution lists enabled 'wasps' as a group to work out what they wanted, or what they thought needed to be done, before participating in regional and national settings. This meant that they could devise lines of attack and ways of recognising and utilising 'the rules' to project what they had informally negotiated on-line into 'real' settings as 'formal' strategies.

Consequently, it was argued that electronic-mail distribution lists reinforced the *National* Association, at the same time as they were seen to threaten it. *Nationalist* sentiments on the part of players, especially those participating via the distribution lists, resurrected notions of collective identity based on national control. In many ways, the penetration of list discourses into formal settings brought into sharper contrast the heterogeneity of players involved with beekeeping and problems associated with implementing national strategies in an increasingly diverse activity. Previously 'outside' or peripheral discourses were rendered more visible through the advent of electronic networks, and this prompted novel strategies on the part of existing individuals and groups, allowing for regrouping across formal roles and conventional membership categories. In this way, the electronic networks reshaped informal and formal ties between players, and compelled dominant players in other settings to reappraise prevailing discourses of orthodoxy.

Electronic-mail distribution lists in beekeeping exemplified ways in which the adoption of computer technologies is thought to result in the

“flattening of the organisation [through] the elimination of the layers of middle management that had existed to co-ordinate organisational knowledge” (Nohria and Berkley, 1994:120). The list players communicated directly and freely with each other simultaneously and fostered economies of scope. Moreover, the Canterbury wasps in regional contexts attempted to reshape the formal roles of Executive Secretary and Editor, and through participation in electronic networks, it was suggested, realised this in practice. Their actions strengthened both local and global scales of action because participation in branch meetings meant they could perpetuate ties with fellow local players necessary to perform their work, and participation on the distribution lists allowed them to foster links with different players in geographically remote areas. However, discussions on the distribution lists also revealed how marketing and business discourses espoused by the wasps presently require national strategies implemented through formal capacities in the National Association.

In conclusion, what is presently taking place in beekeeping may be viewed as contests between sets of players with distinct, yet overlapping, interests redefining who or what are ‘outsiders’. Their struggles in and across the various fora constantly re-evaluate the place of both a *national* and *producer* organisation in beekeeping, and exemplify de-centred processes of ordering craft(s) and leveraging control. In these struggles membership of the National Association still presents benefits and rewards for players with marketing orientations and/or possessing different sets of skills from those adhering to the rhetoric of “those who lift the lids of beehives”. However, the struggles also led to those ‘who lift the lids of beehives’ having to define ‘who’ they are. Their struggles over recognition of local knowledge and the production of regional products have been the critical issue on which the games of all the other actors have turned.



*Plate 9:* A beekeeper's utility and home-made sign on a main route west out of Ashburton.



## METHODOLOGY

### INTRODUCTION

As a commercial beekeeper's daughter, and previous beekeeping employee in Mid Canterbury, my objectives as a social scientist, my social background, and my personal dispositions were intimately intertwined and shaped the research endeavours. Who I am, and who I was seen to be in each of the beekeeping *fields*, is crucial in understanding how I set about doing this research, how I secured access to the fields, and why the research evolved as it did. Different players in and across each of the *fields* used me as a resource – both in the sense of being an asset and a liability. How they were positioned to do this, and their levels of success, helps reveal the “objective structure of the relations between positions” characterising each of the *fields* (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:105).

The following discussion endeavours to link issues, opportunities and obstacles I experienced doing the research, as both an ‘insider’ and an ‘outsider’ in beekeeping, with the strategies and tactics being deployed by various players organising beekeeping through ordering themselves. Observing players and relations between players across the beekeeping fields, and listening to how they articulate their interests and stakes in beekeeping, revealed the *habitus* of agents pertinent to each field. In conjunction with the particular volumes and structure of *capital* possessed by players, *habitus* produces rhetorical strategies through which players seek to legitimate their roles in, and understanding of, the fields. These rhetorical strategies are an effect of previous struggles in each field and of distributions of species of capital defining the fields at particular points in time.

For Bourdieu and Wacquant, “the strategies agents deploy...[and their] recognised ability to tell the truth about the stake of the debate, are the expression of...the different fields in which they are implicated and in which

they occupy positions of various standing (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:256-7). They argue that, “interaction is the visible and purely phenomenal resultant of the intersection of hierarchized fields” (1992:257). Thus, what takes place in each *field* is a product of the state of other *fields*; players bring to the *field* in question accumulated experiences by virtue of possessing *habitus* and species of capital pertinent to other fields. They can participate in each field to conserve and increase their species of capital in and across the other fields, especially the national setting. The co-operative links players form with each other to perform their work cut across and implicate all of the fields, giving rise to a multiplex network of cross-cutting relations between heterogeneous players.

The rhetorical strategies deployed by players are both challenged and reinforced with the entry of *newcomers* into the fields of play. *Newcomers* are associated with introducing ‘subversive’ strategies, and their presence often causes dominant players to reassert prevailing ‘discourses of orthodoxy’ (Bourdieu, 1993:74). Indeed, at times I was a *newcomer* in the fields: My attendance and purpose at beekeeping functions and events, especially during National Conference, were challenged by players. In response to my presence, certain players deployed strategies to preserve their game plans which I was seen to endanger. On the other hand, I was an asset for other players as my presence compelled ‘performances’ to re-present ‘the organisation’ (Law, 1994), whereby facilitating accountability for these players. Bourdieu and Wacquant write,

(i)n their struggle to impose the “impartial” interpretation, that is, to make the viewers recognise their vision as objective, agents have at their command resources that depend on their membership in objectively hierarchized fields and on their position within their respective fields....The discursive strategies of the various agents, and in particular rhetorical effects aimed at producing a front of objectivity, will depend on the balance of symbolic forces between the fields and on the specific resources that membership in these fields grants to the various participants (1992:258).

This discussion is also about how I discovered ‘beekeeping’ through discovering variability in *craft* practice. At the same time as I was familiar with

beekeeping, I had a limited conception of it. Out of doing the research - talking with 'beekeepers' - I was alerted to local and regional variability, and quickly discovered how keeping bees can be quite different in areas outside of Mid Canterbury, as well as within the Canterbury region. My association with beekeeping in Mid Canterbury, therefore, had a downside, initially blinding me to local and regional idiosyncrasies.

The following attempts, albeit briefly, to account for my *habitus* - or 'insider' status - in beekeeping. The main point I wish to make is how doing the bees and my life history are intimately entwined. For me, going to University - physically leaving home for a good part of the year and being exposed to different experiences - actually intensified an affinity for, and understanding of, beekeeping. This is because it always involved going back to it. In other words, processes of immersion, detachment and re-initiation with beekeeping work have brought into sharper focus how keeping bees shapes family life, and familial relations. In this way, beekeeping has also been reproduced in my family as my thesis interweaves life and work.

In doing the research, I invariably drew on my own resources, and on knowledge possessed by my father who is a second generation commercial beekeeper. My father eventually became an informant in the research, articulating practices I knew or suspected took place out in the fields of others doing the bees. My ordeals as a beekeeping employee, recollections of my father's beekeeping practises in Mid Canterbury, and impressions gained of other local beekeepers over the years, had equipped me with the 'know how' to do this. The craft chapter, for instance, is largely a case study of beekeeping in *Mid Canterbury*, and an account of the trials, tribulations and quirks I associate with beekeeping based on first hand experience.

A personal consequence of doing the research has been to see my father in a new light; to position him as a player in the beekeeping fields in relations with other players. I now purport to understanding how he represents himself a great deal more: I recognise field dynamics behind many of the practices he adheres to and the philosophies he espouses. My research has accordingly effected changes in our relationship: While I largely refrained from

disclosing research findings with him, a general debate on sociology and the value of the sociological enterprise ensued out of doing the research. It is not often that I have been inclined, or felt able, to engage my father in debates where I have perceived myself to be on an equal footing. I hope I have acquired a new respect in his eyes.

## BORN IN A BEEHIVE

For as long as I can remember helping my father with some aspect of his beekeeping operation has been a customary part of my life. It was expected and there was always work to be done. As a child I often accompanied by father in the fields while he worked the bees. I vaguely remember being told not to venture too far from the old Bedford truck with its orange hiap while up in the Canterbury high country stations. I was fascinated by the big rolling hills that seemed to extend for infinity in any direction. The places where he kept bees struck me as mysterious and remote, and this impression lingers to this day. I still experience a tinge of excitement going around the countryside in search of the bees. While my father always knows where his hives are, and, presumably, so does the farmer on whose land he keeps bees, to me the hives always seem well concealed. Often they cannot be glimpsed from the rural roads, are accessed only across paddocks, and are positioned around corners, behind hedges, and up against trees.

What I used to find tedious and irritating with 'doing the bees', though, was whenever my father drove to a farm he would actively search for any sign of activity in the yard or around the house as we drove through. If he saw anyone – the 'cocky' himself, his wife, farm workers, and even visitors, he would stop for a yarn. At the time I considered this a waste of time because the sooner we got the yards done the sooner I would get home. The topics conversed always seemed to be the same; yet what I was overlooking was the value and necessity of these interchanges in negotiating the craft of beekeeping.

Furthermore, the first year I went out on the bees as a 'paid' employee was the summer of 1991-1992. That was the first year I experienced hay-fever, probably because it transpired to be a 'ripper' honey season for Mid Canterbury. I remember getting annoyed with my father bellowing whenever he saw a field of clover and practically driving us off the road while admiring how white it was. He used to get similarly worked up with the presence of eucalyptus and nodding thistle flowers. I can only understand his excitement in hindsight, as these are signs of a good honey season shaping up. Fields of white clover in such abundance and flowering eucalyptus are not always seen in Mid Canterbury, and nodding thistles are rapidly disappearing.

One of the first things I learned while working the hives with my father out in the fields was not to wear blue. When I first started in 1991-92, I turned up wearing blue jeans and a blue sweatshirt. On one occasion when my gloves had worn and had holes in the fingers I even taped over the holes with blue adhesive tape. I wondered why countless worker bees were furiously trying to burrow their bottoms into my hands and fingers, even after I had rubbed my gloves through dirt to get rid of the venom odour. My father had omitted to warn me that bees are attracted to blue (perhaps I was supposed to know this already), and I was soon wearing white overalls like he was.

My father seldom wears a bee veil while doing the bees. I tended to wear one only when the weather was cold or when I sensed – or quickly found out - the bees were tichy. I found looking through a veil rather disorientating and this may have been a factor behind my father not wearing one. When I became confident (and competent) working the bees, I would take on many of the same tasks my father performed. [I often became bored standing around watching what he was doing. I also learned to overcome my fear of spiders while doing beekeeping work because large spiders invariably hide under hive lids.] I soon discovered how individual colonies of bees have different temperaments and acquire personalities. Bees also sense fear. I remember one incident where the bees in the yard were particularly calculating. I had worn my veil the entire time we were working them, and had jumped in the truck still wearing it. I left the veil on as we were driving away from the yard, making sure there were no bees left on me. When I subsequently removed the

veil and wound down the truck window, a bee zoomed right in and stung me between the eyes.

When I was younger, I used to dread having to wire frames and then embed them with sheets of wax foundation. My father would make up new boxes and frames during the winter, and my brother and I had to perform these tasks in our school holidays, particularly over summer. The jobs required sitting down all day for days on end performing monotonous hand and arm movements. The wire would cut into my hands after a time, but I disliked wearing gloves as they prevented me from getting the wires tight enough. My father would periodically stride over to where I was working to scrutinise what I was doing, and I always worried about these occasions. He would randomly select a frame or two from the completed boxes, and if the wires were not tight enough, I had to do the frames again. He would also check the embedding because if the wires had been heated too much causing the foundation to melt, or too little and not allowing the foundation to stick, the sheets would fall off.

The worst part of wiring frames and embedding foundation was the monotony of sitting down. Standing to place a pile of frames into boxes or stacking the boxes onto pellets provided welcome relief from the hard bee box I was sitting on. I used to vary how I performed these tasks, and wondered why someone could not invent a better way of doing them. I noticed many of my father's employees over the years would not last long wiring frames and doing the foundation. These were tasks they preferred to avoid. My brother and I were probably the best employees if simply because we could not readily avoid doing the jobs and, hence, acquired more practice. The apparatus used had been constructed by my father many years previous, probably when he first started out in beekeeping. I believe most beekeepers make up their own equipment from bits and pieces of woodwork and other items they have stored around.

My father resolved to do his own honey extracting in the early 1990s. He had been contracting another Mid-Canterbury beekeeper with a large extracting plant to do this for him, like a few other beekeepers in Mid Canterbury. However, the arrangement did not allow him to do his own thing

because it meant putting all his honey through at once, ignoring different strains of honey, and *paying* someone else to do the work. Before that he had been taking his honey to a big outlet in Timaru, but this entailed significant time on the road. When he purchased the necessary equipment and rented part of the former NZ Honey Co-operative shed, my summer jobs in between University were helping extract honey. Initially I had one or two co-employees whom I invariably had to supervise as well as the plant.

However, every year my father would think up 'grand' schemes to streamline the extraction process and enable one person to effectively run it. Output was the name of the game, and the equipment had to function 'properly'. I recall one Monday morning arriving at the plant to discover an inch thick layer of caked wax all over the floor with a similar quantity of honey on top. My father had invented an 'oven' designed to separate the last of the honey from muslin sacks containing wax cappings collected from the 'spinner'. The idea was to heat up the separated wax so that it could later be poured into moulds for recycling. He had completed a trial run during the preceding week, made a few minor alterations, and pronounced it safe to leave over the entire weekend.

A few years later my father built his own honey house. It is a large, rectangular shed - two storied and in six bays. Over the holidays my whole family would reside in the upper portion of the shed in what were intended as employees' quarters. This arrangement was far more convenient in terms of doing beekeeping work and enabling devices in the extraction plant to be monitored regularly. Moreover, it readily allowed my father to work the hours he seems to enjoy - day and night. In the first year of living there, the living quarters were bombarded with dozens of wasps each day attracted by the honey smells. Indeed, bees would regularly visit upstairs if the doors were left open, although the doors were regularly closed as fumes from the forklift being operated down below in the storage area would soon come seeping in. The honey house symbolised, and reproduced, the connection between life and work in beekeeping.

## SHIFTING IDENTITIES

The players who perceived significance in my practical experience with beekeeping in Mid Canterbury cut across the different factions: wasps, marketers, Executive members, hobbyists, and 'beekeepers'. For some players, the fact that I had grown up in a beekeeping family and had been recruited as a beekeeping employee often enough, were seen to afford the base knowledge of beekeeping necessary to understand the work and be able to 'pronounce' on what was going on in and across the beekeeping fields. Being an 'insider' legitimated both my presence and purpose at beekeeping functions in the eyes of these players. This relates to the NBA still being conceived as a *producers'* association and players adhering to the rhetoric of "those who lift the lids of beehives" as ultimately holding the trump card.

In local settings, in particular, players tended to recognise or accept me as an 'insider'. Indeed, I was frequently used by 'beekeepers' to provide *local* knowledge of beekeeping in Canterbury. Drawing on experience accumulated in Canterbury, and participation in my father's beekeeping operation, proved highly strategic not simply in gaining an 'insider' status, but also in terms of facilitating disclosure and reflexivity on the part of those spoken to. It is, after all, through the process of narration – telling stories – that beekeepers negotiate their craft, and I found I could participate in these narratives with relative ease. As a player in beekeeping, I was, therefore, attributed with varying degrees of *capital* in the fields, and was endowed with forms of *habitus* in relation to how beekeeping gets done in Mid Canterbury.

However, my family connection with beekeeping operated as a two-edged sword. For some players, coming from Canterbury and being my father's daughter, immediately had negative connotations. I was allied with 'the Canterbury Way' and/or judged on the basis of my father's reputation. At National Conference, for instance, I was bombarded with enquires from players and my presence provoked mixed emotions, including suspicion, speculation, and hostility. Some players were interrogators, and others felt obliged to explain or justify what was going on. Some put on pretences, whilst others tried to ignore me. It was subsequently manifested that my presence at



Conference had been contested by a Branch (or individual Branch member) prior to Conference and 'thrashed out' during an Executive meeting. This was news to me as securing access to the national setting through the Executive Secretary had seemed straightforward. The Branch had apparently questioned whether my attendance at Conference was appropriate, presumably given the nature of the remits. The fact that there had been a complaint enlightens antagonism on the part of particular players that I sensed and experienced overtly during Conference. Some of these players will know of my father and/or have personally met him.

On the other hand, my father invariably proved useful as a contact person during Conference. It was often difficult 'breaking into' groups of beekeepers engaging in 'gab' sessions, and then knowing how to participate. My father was able to introduce me to a number of people and to instigate topics for discussion. In many ways he was a 'broker' like 'Doc' who facilitated Whyte's entry into the Italian slum district in *Street Corner Society*; yet I was always apprehensive about using my father in this way and appearing to be aligned with him. My determination to separate myself from him for ethical reasons, nevertheless, tended to break down in practice, and this began in the *national* setting. It was through doing the research that I realised how I could, and should, use my father as an informant just like other participants. Later, I was able to critique aspects of his beekeeping operation on the basis of what I was learning of beekeeping in other *regions*. I enjoyed taunting him in relation to things he was doing 'wrong'.

At the outset of my research, I was very apprehensive about my connection with my father, and I worried about his reputation amongst players and the implications of this for my own reputation and role as a researcher. During Canterbury Branch meetings, for instance, I was determined to maintain a seemingly 'passive' role by being a 'silent' observer and listener. While there were times where I wanted to interject, to confirm what was being said or to counteract it, and to ask questions, I always refrained from doing so. I feared anything I might say or do would be seen to convey particular interests and biases and associate me with certain players, especially my father. I did

not wish to restrict my research endeavours in any way, and sought to maintain an 'open' approach in terms of gaining information.

My perseverance with maintaining such an approach may have rendered by disposition and demeanour somewhat artificial or awkward to those present and contributed to, or reproduced, similar qualities in them. I was particularly conscious of my body language and facial expressions. Even during suppers I was unable to relax and make the most of the occasions. In fact, I must have disguised my association with my father rather well because, during supper at the end of the first Canterbury Branch meeting, a player actually inquired whether I was my father's daughter after all. My father was in attendance at all the Branch meetings I attended, and he may have found my demeanour somewhat disconcerting. I believe he was equally pensive about our relationship; although he enjoyed his brokerage role at National Conference and, in the latter stages of the research, was pleased to be able to participate in a couple of short interviews.

When my father initiated the first Branch remit concerning apiary levies and began venting his frustration with the new system, I remember fearing that he was going to jeopardise my position and credibility by becoming fired up, especially as it appeared he did not initially have full support of fellow members. The Canterbury 'wasps' on this occasion were quick to counteract him. On the other hand, when my father was nominated as main delegate for Conference, I recorded the following in my journal:

Dad possesses a lot of credibility among other members. Both he and [the co-delegate] have been nominated as delegates, and this position confers a lot of trust. I can see myself how [the co-delegate] is trustworthy and diligent. This is very interesting in respect of Dad given that he is always outspoken. He has respect among other members as being a fair and honest player. This must have helped my position too.

I was nevertheless perturbed by my father assuming such a strategic and highly visible role, and one which I saw carrying tremendous responsibility, particularly in the regional and national fields. I was unsure how well he could

play the role given the whole process of working out who was voting for what appeared confusing and unnecessarily complicated. It seemed many players were no more familiar with the voting processes than I was. Furthermore, my father had earlier intimated to me that he did not wish to be Branch delegate because of my research, although when nominated he only half-heartedly tried to get out of it. In hindsight, I underestimated his ability to 'play the game'.

I had not expected my father to use me as a resource in order to fulfil his role as Branch delegate. When he did so on one occasion he caught me off guard. He was trying to 'sort out' what a Canterbury wasp had been 'going on about' in relation to the Branch's remits concerning the Executive Secretary. Later on I also helped my father of my own accord, and I believe his earlier actions equipped me with the realisation that I could help 'the Branch' through my father's role as Branch delegate. It was during Canterbury Branch meetings prior to National Conference that I first questioned whether I should be imparting 'knowledge' acquired as a subscriber to the 'NZBkprs' electronic-mail distribution list to 'beekeepers'. In the end, I succumbed to temptation on two issues. I had become immersed in 'conspiracy' theories being espoused by list participants in the lead up to Conference. These concerned alleged actions of the NBA President 'restricting' information to Branches. I therefore printed out notice of the four levy resolutions, as well notice of the NBA's counter proposal for implementing of the Pest Management Strategy, and gave these to my father as Branch delegate. I thought I was playing a part in alleviating what was later described by a 'wasp' at Conference as an 'unconstitutional' and undemocratic situation. At the time, I did not have sufficient knowledge of the state of the beekeeping fields, nor of the positions and game plans of the various players. As such, I was caught up supporting one side; and not being able to critically analyse the discourses and knowledge being negotiated on the list. I believe I was guilty of affording priority and 'truthfulness' to list correspondence.

Incidentally, subscribing to the beekeeping distribution lists had initially posed a number of ethical issues in terms of 'listening in' to correspondence as a researcher. The first journal entry I made related my concerns:

I have found myself an 'inside' listener and observer of 'private' conversations and 'personal' feuds as a subscriber (by accident) to the NZ Beekeepers' Distribution List....I feel a little uneasy about the ease at which I can 'eavesdrop' on such communications – the boundary between public and private is blurred. [The list administrator] has set up his homepage as a vehicle for self-expression....[and] has created a loose organisation of co-conspirators which functions as an alternative and more up-to-date form of communication to the industry's journal.

My anxieties about being 'party' to list proceedings were intensified by uncertainties and ambiguities surrounding the use of the electronic medium. The 'NZBkprs' list had been in existence for only six months when I first subscribed, and its membership has notably evolved during the course of my research; although both lists are still marked by a core of active participants. The feeling of being privy to confidential information gradually subsided with the growth of the 'NZBkprs' list, and with knowledge that many subscribers were passing on list correspondence to non-subscribers. These processes enabled me to feel relatively happy confiding the material to my father.

In hindsight, I realise that being a researcher and relatively computer literate, I might have been expected by active participants to actively engage on the list, rather than simply subscribing. Both the Horticultural Research Scientists and MAF officers participate as *producers* and *users* of information. Subscribers to the list may have harboured expectations of my *use* based on the past practice of these players. I now comprehend how 'silent' subscribers are regarded with levels of suspicion and distrust by active participants because they are seen as 'free-riders'. However, at the time, and perceiving the significance of what was unfolding on the list, I wanted to minimise my involvement as much as possible. I desired to be a *witness* to its evolution without taking an active role in it. While this meant being an outside player in this field, I considered any participation on my part would be judged unfavourably by national players, aligning me with 'the wasps', and rendering access to the national players difficult.

My status as an 'outsider' in beekeeping stemmed from two sources: Being a sociologist, and being a relatively young *female*. I was frequently

confronted with comments to the effect that, 'I can understand it if you were a management student or into food science, but what interest does a sociologist have in beekeeping?' and 'what is sociology?' Beekeepers are not alone in being sceptical of sociology, but their seeming faith in numbers and figures causes them to label the discipline 'fuzzy' and abstract'. Uncertainty and ambiguity often fuel misunderstandings, and I believe there was a high degree of speculation and suspicion concerning my status as a 'scientist' and the legitimacy of what I was attempting to do. For some players this was sufficient to brand me an 'outsider'.

As a young female, I intruded into a largely male domain. This is how I perceived my experience even though there are female players in beekeeping. A number of women occupy marketing or administrative positions in larger commercial outfits, and there were female Chairpersons and Secretaries of the various specialist associations at National Conference. Moreover, wives (and daughters) frequently engage in beekeeping work and/or book-keeping responsibilities in family owned and run commercial operations. There seemed to be a high turnout of couples at Conference, consistent with the national setting being deployed as a holiday occasion. The 1998 Conference was, indeed, a family affair: The wives of the current Vice President of the NBA, and President of one of the hosting Branches, were not simply 'behind the scene' actors arranging Conference, they enjoyed a strong physical presence too. Their efforts were recognised and applauded by Conference attendees at the end of Conference. [The thesis largely neglects the contribution of women in organising beekeeping and this is a consequence of my immersion in beekeeping largely through a male figure – my father. It does not attempt, for instance, to delve into strategies of production and reproduction in family farms; although my own undertaking of the thesis is a way in which beekeeping is being reproduced in my family.]

At the same time, female players appear less endowed with forms of *capital* symbolised through *formal* positions in the NBA. There has been only one female President of the NBA, and of the thirty Branch and Co-Branch delegates at the 1998 Conference, only one was female. It seems a division of responsibility is operating in beekeeping based on gender, and I believe I

violated this. I was conscious of this being a problem, particularly in 'social' functions, and was unsure whether I should be associating with groups of women or interacting with the men. At the Canterbury Branch's field-day, for instance, I was designated cooking duties by the Branch President, and later expected to take my tea break with 'the ladies'. At the Zane Grey Restaurant on Otehei Bay in the national setting, I attribute my sense of alienation not simply to being an outsider, but also to my gender.

At the Restaurant, participants were overwhelmingly men and they clustered together in large groups around central tables. Female players were visually sidelined. While there was the odd female representative at the central tables, presumably sitting alongside their husbands, most preferred to form more intimate groups further back. I had resolved to take a seat at a quiet and relatively small table because I was feeling awkward in this setting. It had become apparent to me that it was in contexts such as this that 'beekeepers' rework and cement their identities as 'beemen'. The rhetoric of "those who lift the lids of beehives" was being physically and symbolically played out by *male* beekeepers.

The theme for the occasion was 'ship-wreck' and this was not taken lightly by players. It provided a competition to see who could dress-up demonstrating the most imagination and creativity. Apparently a dress up occasion is a regular occurrence at Conference – almost a tradition. I had simply worn my old horse jogpurs, a hooded sweater and running shoes, and felt increasingly out of place as I observed all the effort other players had gone to. Even my father had made a visible effort and had attracted attention at a backpacker's hostel. Beekeepers tend to look roguish and this is consistent with their image of themselves as being 'at one with nature'. Male beekeepers often grow beards and/or moustaches. These features were accentuated by the fancy-dress attire, and their costumes reinforced the image of toughness and manliness that 'beemen' aspire to. For instance, the 'Berry' brothers dressed up as pirates. They are twins and distinguish themselves with one having short hair and a long beard, and the other having long hair and a short beard. By virtue of these physical characteristics they suited their roles well. One was Captain Hook, and his 'twin' brandished a patch across one eye. The

image of the 'beeman' was also expressed through the consumption of alcohol and the 'entertainment' that was provided.

In summary, I had shifting identities by virtue of being continually alternated as an 'insider' and an 'outsider' by players in attempts to position or classify me in moulds they could readily understand and use to evaluate my actions and demeanour in beekeeping functions. Being an 'insider' or an 'outsider' was largely seen to determine the 'side' I was on; or the faction that I should be fitted into. The beekeeping fields also reveal shifting identities of players as they engage in organising and ordering themselves as craftspeople, producers, honey packers, pollinators, marketers, businesspersons, professionals, scientists and government officials across the various settings. This is due to different attributes of *capital* they possess, or are seen to possess, in relation to other players, including myself, in each of the fields giving rise to divergent field positions.

My insider/outsider status was also played out in interviews in terms of how participants were relating to me and the rhetorical and strategic devices they deployed. I noted they all had their individual techniques to cope, and many tried to discover players whom I had already interviewed and who I was planning to interview. It was remarked on a couple of occasions that I was 'a fly on the wall', amassing and comparing information. Nevertheless, I was able to talk with and, more importantly, to observe a range of players in the respective fields, through largely concealing who I was already acquainted with and appearing to be 'on side' with the players I spoke to. Deciphering rifts between players, and comparing interpretations or accounts of the state of the fields, turned out to be highly useful in unveiling game strategies and the relative positions occupied by players in beekeeping.

Indeed, for some players the very ambiguity of my status induced them to constantly vie for my attention and allegiance. Being seen with me in 'public' was important if simply to irritate other players. Aligning themselves with me may have been an attempt to realise alternative game strategies and secure greater (or lesser) *capital* on their parts. During a Honey Tasting Competition in the national setting, for instance, I was seated with the

Canterbury Branch and was promptly joined by a 'wasp' – the list administrator. He seemed very eager for my attention and was determined to be seen talking with me in this setting.

The Honey Tasting competition was significant because players regrouped into their regional branches in the national setting, and contested for superior knowledge in respect of honey varieties. The contrasting discourses of packers and producers, which are also played off in regional meetings, were at once differentiated and brought together. I immediately sensed players were treating the competition very seriously. Individual players had to be careful not to sit down at the wrong Branch's table, otherwise someone would announce that there were 'strangers' at the table, and the 'stranger' would be obliged to quickly move on. This is what happened as there were 'strangers' sitting at the Canterbury Branch table, and I was initially mistaken for one too.

At the outset of my research, I had envisaged the list administrator as a sponsor or lever into beekeeping. Having set up the beekeeping homepage and by maintaining it, I presumed he had credibility, respect and *legitimacy* within the NBA: I surmised he would have a *formal* position or, at least, an *official* mandate. While President of the NBA when first devising the homepage, for the most part, and at the time of originating the 'NZBkprs' distribution list, the list administrator has not occupied *formal* positions in the association. Nonetheless, he has, in many ways, fulfilled a sponsorship role for my research: It was the list administrator who suggested I subscribe to the 'NZBkprs' distribution list and who later permitted me to subscribe to the second list, the 'NBA' list. He presumably saw me as a potential resource in this field and a lever for his own purposes. Moreover, I was also able to secure access to, and was approached by, players with whom he has ties of friendship and trust.

However, in the national setting, I was constantly made aware of the list administrator's precarious position or 'stake' in beekeeping. Certain players, notably *national* players, would bring him into conversations of their own instance and allude to his *hobbyist* status. He is branded a 'computer expert'



as this reinforces a distinct set of skills relative to “those who lift the lids of beehives”. [The fact that he is American born appears secondary to the number of hives he actually owns in determining his status as an ‘outsider’ in the eyes of *national* players.] In this way, players categorise him as a non-participant in the fields of others doing the bees. Moreover, his ability to verbally articulate knowledge of the ‘rules’ of the NBA so persuasively, both guarantees him a place in the national field at the same time as it endangers that place.

At Conference, I was concerned that access to particular players whom I planned to interview would be precluded because of the actions of players, such as the list administrator, and what was transpiring on the floor of Conference. In actuality, such actions and events had fortuitous consequences for my research as the targeted players, as well as many others, became determined to present their stories. [Many of these stories could not be heard because of time constraints, and the parameters of doing research for a master’s thesis; although I believe some of those I was unable to interview may have attributed this to my father’s influence.] The very fact that the 1998 National Conference was riddled with conflict and animosity, urged a number of players to vent their frustration or disappointment with the proceedings and/or with particular players, and to condemn what was happening as negative and ‘abnormal’. In many cases, I also believe talking to me on an informal basis and as a ‘newcomer’ was an effort to console themselves with what was happening and an attempt to understand it.

Conflict was, accordingly, highly lucrative to my course of research, and characterises Bourdieu’s notion of *fields*. It causes players to question and restate the *fields* and what is at stake. Many of the ‘wasps’, for instance, are perceived as ‘newcomers’ in the *national* field by current formal position holders, and are attributed with disrupting the game for players adhering to the rhetoric of “those who lift the lids of beehives”. National position holders may be asserting ‘common sense’ by allowing “their *habitus* [to] follow its natural bent in order to comply with the immanent necessity of the field and [to] satisfy the demands contained within it...[without being] aware of fulfilling a duty, still less of seeking to maximise their (specific) profit” (Bourdieu,

1993:76). Put another way, while the 'common sense' players frequently allude to during Conference may be a recognition of mutual understandings of the game; it is not always distinguishable from the rhetorical strategies the variously positioned players deploy. Bourdieu observes,

It tends to be forgotten that a fight presupposes agreement between the antagonists about what it is that is worth fighting about; those points of agreement are held at the level of what 'goes without saying'...in other words everything that makes the field itself, the game, the stakes, all the presuppositions that one tacitly and even unwittingly accepts by the mere fact of playing, of entering the game (Bourdieu, 1993:73-74).

Thus, conflict serves to reinforce players' sense of the game and what the *field* is all about. Bourdieu calls this "an objective complicity which underlies all the antagonisms" (1993:73).

Of course, timing was also crucial in my research and shaped the reception I received. I was conducting field-work on how players in a nationally constituted Association were ordering themselves at a time when discontentment with the NBA was especially ripe and highly visible. Organising craft through the NBA was, and is, being furiously contested across the beekeeping fields, reinforcing what the Association is all about for players. For 'wasps', the timing of my research was seen as advantageous to their cause, especially if they could get me on side. They may have assumed my practical experience with beekeeping would earn me respect and credibility on the part of *formal* position holders, their main adversaries. For some 'beekeepers', however, the timing of my research meant I was often perceived as a threat; as another 'outsider' who was simply going to tell them how to organise themselves and run their Association.

It is not surprising, given the ambiguity of my status in beekeeping and what was transpiring in the beekeeping fields, that my presence at National Conference was contested. It was during the first Association meeting on day one, for instance, that I was called to account for my presence and the existence of my tape recorder. The meeting was for the Queen Bee Genetic

Improvement Group. The directors of this Group consider it a private company. They assert its independence from the NBA, while nevertheless recruiting shareholders from the NBA membership and making use of the national forum. The meeting was apparently a 'closed' meeting for shareholders and directors; although many players, including myself, did not realise this and turned up. The purpose turned out to be discussing the dissolution of the company and the reasons for this. It transpired to be a meeting ripe with hostility and conflict, and allegations of misconduct were made against the company's directors. The following is an extract taken from my fieldnotes recording the ordeal:

The Secretary of the BGI group interjected the proceedings suddenly. In a quiet and accusing voice he asked, "Whose tape recorder is that?" "Mine" was my feeble reply. The audience laughed as if to relieve the tension that had apparently been building up. "And could you please explain it?" It was not so much the words he spoke, but how he spoke them. I didn't shrink immediately into my chair, nor did I immediately become hot and red in the face. But I felt myself becoming more glued to that chair, in a stiff outline, eyes averted, the longer I was in that room. I spoke and explained my purpose at the meeting and my reasons for wanting to tape it. I think I started off well, but became increasingly nervous as I realised the full significance of my sudden predicament....It all seemed to happen so quickly, and I was scared.

The presence of two strong dissidents – both shareholders of the Group – meant that my tape recorder was promptly turned off. I discovered one of my prime objectors was to forever taunt me at every subsequent opportunity he had.

In addition, my attendance at Canterbury Branch meetings was both advantageous and disadvantageous for the regional players. It transpired fairly early on in the course of doing the research that I had inadvertently selected perhaps the most 'vocal' and acrimonious of the regional branches. In the eyes of certain players, my 'choice' of Branch had immediately positioned me with 'the wasps'. I may also have been branded pro-marketing, despite 'beekeepers' in Canterbury tending to oppose generic marketing: They do not see direct benefits accruing to them personally in light of the marketing

consultant's alleged preoccupation with darker honeys, such as manuka honey.

The existence and sound of my tape recorder, at least initially, continually alerted Branch members of my presence and the fact that proceedings were being recorded. We all grew accustomed to the discernible sound it made when the side of the tape ended, and the noises it would make when I was obliged to change tapes. This caused frequent stuttering – mainly on the part of those ‘beekeepers’ closest to the tape recorder. At these meetings I often felt uneasy about having the tape recorder on when members were ‘thrashing out’ issues concerning the Executive Secretary; even though particular members were not apparently bothered by this. The Canterbury wasps, for example, quickly grew accustomed to the presence of my tape recorder. They made a joke out of it, and proceeded to use it to their advantage. One of the wasps would slow down his speech, speak louder, and incline forward in his seat towards the tape recorder to ensure what he had to say was recorded and could be *used*. Thus, dominant players in regional settings sought to use me as a mouthpiece to espouse the ‘discourse of orthodoxy’ prevailing in that field. I was, at times, used as a pawn by these players to push their own agendas. Due to my seeming ‘non-participation’ – through ‘simply’ observing – I was also not seen to notably bring forth ‘subversive’ strategies into the field.

In total, I sat in on four Canterbury Branch meetings – May, June, September, and October, and also participated in the Branch's June Honey Promotion and November field-day. I was struck by the display of formality and the seriousness with which Branch members treated the regional settings, especially during the May Branch meeting. At this meeting, the Branch President presented me as a *visitor*, and repeated this formality in the September meeting after I manifested my intention to attend two further Branch meetings post-National Conference. This formality was at odds with how I had envisaged branch business being conducted, and was largely attributable, I believe, to my presence. It gradually subsided over time as I became accepted and my presence taken-for-granted, and also because topics of discussion were ‘heating up’.

I believe the longer I associated with the Branch the more accepted I became. There was an initial suspicion and scepticism that I would only turn up at one or two Branch meetings, armed with a tape recorder, gather the information I wanted, and then disappear. When I was still around after Conference this mollified many players and conferred credibility on my part. I was seen to be taking a genuine and active interest in beekeeping consistent with my family roots. At the Branch's field-day in November, I received tremendous recognition and encouragement, not simply from those Canterbury Branch members present. This was what I needed because at the time I recall my faith in my ability and in the thesis was at a low. The following is a passage from my diary recording the day's events:

I was tired and worn out in the days leading to this, particularly the night before and the morning of the day. Yet I came away from the field-day feeling inspired and encouraged....[Two players] were pleased to see my presence at the day and both were chatty and forthcoming, enquiring into my progress. I guess I received a positive reception from others to - in their own ways....[One player] feels the timing is right for my thesis to come out and to provide a fresh perspective and to tell the Executive what they need to do or, at least, help them understand what is going on in the Industry at present. I understand that there was an article in the recent *New Zealand Beekeeper* journal about my father's uncles and how 'successful' they were at beekeeping. This means that not only is there going to be a timely thesis written..., the thesis student is a 'Newton'.

My seating positions during the 'political' sessions at Conference reflected the uncertainty of my status in beekeeping. For instance, on day three I had been allocated a seat alongside the Auckland Branch delegates. Their table was right at the front of the room and on the aisle. They were reluctant to accommodate me even though the second delegate was not often present and his chair and allocated desk space were vacant. This made me feel like an intruder, particularly as my seat was protruding into the central aisle, rendering my presence highly conspicuous to players. Later the first delegate inquired whether I was working for the media. I had forgotten that I

was not wearing my name tag. He seemed appeased when I assured him I was not.

When the tables were rearranged for the following day, I was designated a place between tables and, therefore, off the idle; but I eventually ended up sitting behind the table of the Hawkes Bay Branch in an empty seat. In this new 'position' I felt highly privileged: The Hawkes Bay delegates were friendly, welcoming, and liked to offer me information. The position of my microphone also proved effective as one of the Hawkes Bay delegates was to utter private comments all the way through. Furthermore, one of the 'wasps', a South Island delegate, was now immediately behind me, and another, a North Island delegate, was directly opposite. Hence, I was encircled by delegates and 'wasps' and felt subsumed by them.

At the time I believed sitting amongst Branch delegates rendered me less visible from players on the floor, and I suspected, anyhow, that my presence on day four had been largely forgotten about. In hindsight, I puzzle over why I felt safe amidst the Branch delegates and why I was anxious about not being seen from the Conference floor. Being with the Branch delegates (and some of the wasps) ensured that I was highly visible. Indeed, I was sitting with those more likely to contest and/or to exploit my presence at Conference. I recall receiving sly glances from some of these players, notably pleased or displeased with my seating position, and what I was hearing. For other players, such as 'beekeepers', my seating position may have been seen as privileged and helped confer credibility on my part.

Marcus (1995) aptly sums up my predicament of juggling an insider/outsider status while doing multi-sited research:

It is like a playing out in practice of the feminist slogan of the political as personal, but in this case it is the political as synonymous with the professional persona....(O)ne finds oneself with all sorts of cross-cutting and contradictory personal commitments. These conflicts are resolved, perhaps ambivalently, not by refuge in being a detached anthropological scholar, but in being a sort

of ethnographer-activist, renegotiating identities in different sites as one learns more about a slice of the...system (1995:113).

In hindsight, I did not fully embrace, or consistently practice, this activist capacity in the beekeeping fields to the extent that I could have done. For instance, I was afraid to *participate* during social situations in the *national* setting because I thought that was not what a scientist, as an *outsider*, did. This was the same inhibition that checked me from actively participating on the distribution lists. Unlike Powdermaker who admits to being “the kind of person who likes to participate” (1966:171) and who “cannot think of anything more boring than watching people having a good time without getting some pleasure, too” (1966:177), I am the opposite. My not always confident and shy disposition shaped how I did the research, and how I was perceived by other players.

Powdermaker observes of her study of African-Americans in Indianola, Mississippi during the 1930s,

An understanding of the pleasures and recreations in Negro life was as important as knowing about the inequities of the economic system and other Negro problems, and could be gained only through participation. Without this participation, interviewing would probably have been less successful (1966:171).

She also comments,

A peculiar characteristic of field work in anthropology and in other social sciences is that the scientist has to communicate with the objects studied and they with him, and that he is part of the situation studied. The communication varies from spontaneous to planned, from superficial to deep, from subjective to objective areas of interest, from purely verbal to more subtle and emotional expression. The range for an effective field worker usually will include the whole continuum in any one field situation (Powdermaker, 1966:287).

Nonetheless, I had embarked on my research according priority to the (taped) interviews I would undertake, and not fully contemplating the experiences and

opportunities I would have in the national setting as part of participant observation. I was not prepared to abandon my journal and camera to fully participate and use my 'insider' status when it would have been most fruitful.

For example, during the 'offshore experience' at Conference, I acted out an 'outsider' role by attempting to freeze, or animate, a particular identity in that setting. The event was a pleasurable forum where things could be said and issues raised that would be contentious in the 'political' settings. Players expected each other to forget their inhibitions and put aside the tensions and conflicts associated with Conference. It was assumed by particular players that I would follow suit, but when I continued *being a researcher* this was remarked upon. The North Island beekeeper who had objected to my tape recorder during the Queen Bee Genetic Improvement Group meeting called me 'the girl with the pram' or something to similar effect. He was presumably referring to the fact that I was still carrying my briefcase-looking bag containing my observations notebook and camera. He may also have spotted me recording observations and taking photographs from the back of the room. Other players, however, were able to make a joke out of the tape-recording incident, and one player commented that he would like a copy of the tape.

At the time, it seemed most players were immersed in the 'fun and games'. The atmosphere was one of festivity; it was like a celebration of beekeeping and of 'beekeepers'. However, I found the entertainment at the Restaurant distasteful and derogatory, and experienced a strong sense of alienation that night. I later discovered I was not the only player (female) feeling this way. I recall how the Executive players sat towards the peripheries during the meal, as I myself did. The occasion was largely a *producers'* night out; a setting in which both Executive players and wasps were actually sidelined by 'beekeepers'. It also became apparent that while some players were anxious that I find a seat somewhere; others did not care and treated me as an imposition in this context. I also suspect my youthful appearance, height, and quiet manner may have inclined particular players to take me less seriously and/or to make me the object/subject of joking.



## DISCOVERING VARIABILITY

My research would have been radically different had the 1998 National Conference been held in Ashburton instead of Waitangi, as scheduled in 1999. I would not have had the same opportunity to tap into how beekeeping gets done outside of the Canterbury region. By physically crossing the north-south divide I acquired insight into disparate beekeeping practices and discovered what beekeeping is all about. This knowledge was keenly sought by Canterbury players upon my return to Branch meetings after Conference. In many ways it cemented my status as an 'insider' in beekeeping, as I was now intimately familiar with one of the main reasons for, and purpose behind, beekeeping talk.

I have misgivings about not having spent more time immersed in *local* settings in the North Island. My trip up North was rushed and I had missed out on scrutinising the honey houses of North Island beekeepers I visited. Interviews often took place at night and always took longer than expected. If I had the chance to 're-do' the research, I would accompany local beekeepers out in the fields doing the bees. At some stage, although certainly not straight away, I would also arm myself with a camera and tape-recorder, or possibly even a video camera. This would capture images of beekeepers at work, as well as the actual phrases beekeepers use to talk about their craft 'on the job'.

Moreover, in terms of facilitating my 'insider' status in beekeeping, I believe my research would have benefited from commencing with informal chats with local beekeepers at their places, subsequently venturing out into the fields while they work the bees, and ultimately engaging in more structured interviews with these players. This would take place before attempting to access the *political* fields. In this way, I would feel more like an 'insider' in the political settings, and be able to participate with a greater number of players with whom I was already associated and whose actions I could evaluate in light of past performances.

Nonetheless, by the time of composing the craft chapter, which was the final chapter drafted for the thesis, I was conscious of having had a limited

conception of 'beekeepers' and 'beekeeping' based on the example set by my father in Mid Canterbury. I had learned how beekeepers in either Island perceive those keeping bees in the other Island as a 'different breed' of beekeeper. They display great interest in how beekeeping gets done elsewhere; although this curiosity does not appear to extend beyond national borders. I first came to realise beekeepers were intrigued by *local* practices of other beekeepers during interchanges with various players in social encounters at Conference, but it was in interviews with North Island beekeepers that I began to grasp the full significance of regional variability. In these interviews participants were using me as a resource to tap into the 'Canterbury way'. At the time I invariably perceived this as a strategy for understanding who I was and to test my credibility on the part of participants. It quickly became apparent, though, that what 'the beekeepers' really wanted to talk about was beekeeping *practice*.

It had not been my original intention to explore beekeeping craft. I was perhaps guilty of taking for granted the work beekeepers do and how they go about doing it; using craft as a starting point for the research, and, ultimately, overlooking an outsiders' analytical interest in it. In the back of my mind I was very much aware of the individualistic ethos operating in beekeeping and referred to it briefly in the rationale for my thesis. However, I did not fully appreciate the significance of the 'beeman' rhetoric; nor, indeed, was I initially treating it as a rhetoric. This was a consequence of being an 'insider'. Moreover, similarities in how beekeepers go about representing themselves and their craft become more interesting given the centrality of geographical variation in beekeeping.

A preoccupation with how 'the industry' was being 'governed' frequently rendered my questioning and lines of enquiry in interviews artificial, regimented in practice, and largely obscure to the 'beekeepers' (and wives) I spoke to. I had overestimated the interest of 'beekeepers' in 'political' issues and in the role of 'public' actors in beekeeping. For instance, a Canterbury beekeeper doubted what use he could be to my research. He does not involve himself in the 'politics side of it', explaining that his 'real concern' is doing what he does well, and that is keeping bees to produce honey. For this local

player, "as long as the industry organisation is running okay, or seems to be, I am contented". My experiences with North Island beekeeping couples were similar. One couple delighted in joking about the long hours they put into beekeeping work, and how they do it for the lifestyle.

An information sheet and accompanying consent form, describing my proposed research, suggested to potential participants,

Your involvement in this research will mean participating in at least one semi-structured interview, and reflecting on your experiences in the Honey Industry and participation in Industry structures. There will be an opportunity to address particular issues of concern or interest to you....(T)he researcher brings to the research a greater understanding of beekeeping, but will also have preconceptions about the Industry. You are welcome to challenge these preconceptions.

The use of 'flexibly structured' interviews (Whyte, 1943) proved highly productive for reasons not anticipated at the outset. They largely permitted 'transgressions' on the part of 'beekeepers', and this 'data' emerged as highly useful. Unfortunately the tape recordings of interviews with North Island beekeepers were of poor quality due to technical difficulties and I had to rely on field observations recorded in my journal.

Despite positive contingencies emerging from the interviews, I have reservations as to how effective some of these were in actually facilitating free-flowing discussion and aiding reflexivity. I believe prior notions on my part tended to impede my ability to take up opportunities and pursue lines of enquiry instigated by participants. Nevertheless, some players, such as 'wasps', were intellectually stimulated by my lines of questioning, and this provoked reflexivity and improvising on my own part, albeit usually after the fact. As my understanding developed, questions I anticipated asking did become less relevant or needed revamping. I recall adding, omitting and rewriting questions before going into interviews with different informants. While transcribing some of the interviews, I recorded in my journal that,

questions are being raised that I had the opportunity to zoom in on in subsequent interviews and encounters, but didn't because I was being single-minded....My preoccupation with discovering different viewpoints on prepared questions clouded my capacity to recognise and pursue these other opportunities, and was also incompatible with my stated intention not to have uniform and structured interviews. I believe it was more a lack of confidence in my ability than a conscious endeavour to do this.

A concern with actors' own accounts or narratives of their experiences, interests and goals, and the meanings and understandings they bring to beekeeping, stemmed from the actor-oriented approach advocated by Long and Long (1992). My initial focus had been on 'positioned' individuals, and I now recognise this approach as an aspect of Bourdieu's sociology: conversing with players in this way means freezing the state of a field(s) at a particular point in time and gaining insight into the state of play through existing positions of individual players and their rhetorical strategies.

In other words, as a pattern began to emerge of how beekeeping was being organised, and how I could go about presenting it, the '*honey industry*' transformed into *beekeeping*, and the organisation and administration of 'the industry' became 'doing the bees'. The thesis was no longer preoccupied with marketing and free-trade – as this was one of many discourses utilised by players. It became more concerned with practices of keeping bees, of which producing honey may only be a part, and with understanding the ways in which beekeepers *order* their relations with different players and, consequently, redefine who they are. I was obliged to review my field-notes and interview data in order to elucidate beekeeping *metis* and variations in local knowledge, and this involved me gathering 'new' data at a somewhat late stage during writing up.

## CHANGING FOCUS

One of the original conceptions behind the thesis was to understand the processes by which individual beekeepers were both shaping, and being

shaped by, organisations. I sought to gauge the participation of *local* actors in organising beekeeping through membership of organisations composing 'the industry'. My thesis proposal recorded that,

the thesis will inquire into the relationship between organisations and actors in the 'honey industry': Why certain actors have recourse to organisations and institutions at particular times; and at other times deploy informal (or illicit) practices and processes which frustrate and circumvent formal procedures and institutional arrangements. The thesis will question the interests, motivations, and goals of those involved with 'the industry', and assess their relative capacities to pursue and enforce ideas and self-initiatives. This means probing into the interpretative and strategic processes by which they "attempt to create space[s] for themselves in order to carry out their own 'projects'" (Long, 1992:34, in Long and Long, 1992).

I was concerned with emphasising the duality of the relationship between structure and agency, elucidating individual roles and functions in beekeeping, and determining *key* actors.

In order to achieve the above, I resolved to trace the formulation of Branch remits, their subsequent presentation at National Conference, and how remits carried at Conference were subsequently dealt with. I believed that by deploying case studies of particular NBA Branches the remit processes could be examined concretely and generalised across all Branches. For time and financial reasons, however, it became feasible only to look at the Canterbury Branch. This contingency nevertheless proved to be highly positive and rewarding owing to the centrality of regional variability and the reputation of this particular Branch.

I commenced the research determined to interview a broad range of players. I thought this would enable an overview of the 'honey industry' and permit an analysis of the patterning of connections between heterogeneous players composing 'the industry'. This was in line with another of my initial intentions to conceive 'the industry' as a multiplex network:

...treating the 'honey industry' not as a unified whole, but as an evolving entity over time and across space consisting of heterogeneous actors in social networks. This necessitates identifying the actors concerned, both public and private, and individual and collective, and understanding how the 'honey industry' is constructed and de-constructed out of these actors 'variously' located in multiple and intersecting networks (per thesis proposal).

While I was unable to 'interview' all those planned, mainly government actors, I ended up 'talking with' a great deal of other players. This resulted in amassing information which later became surplus to my requirements. As the research unfolded, some of the planned interviews became less crucial, and tapes were selectively transcribed or simply listened to. In a couple of instances, I was unable to listen to, or transcribe, interviews with players.

I had identified free trade philosophies and practices in the global marketplace as the backdrop or context for my research, and embarked with this in mind: focusing on marketing and business discourses, and resolving to contemplate how the 'honey industry' might evolve in a highly competitive and constantly changing environment. I set out to investigate 'the industry' perceiving it as a small-scale and somewhat unique industry in a small country with relatively high degrees of openness to the global economy. The thesis proposal abstract intimated that,

The thesis...seeks an understanding of how a relatively small-scale industry...is being governed and coordinated by actors – public and private, individual and collective – in the context of 'free trade'. It is hoped to demonstrate in the case of the 'honey industry' that it is less a question of how the state has reduced it's role, than how the state's role is being reorganised.

The above focus stemmed from an earlier honours dissertation where I had traced the history of three marketing organisations in beekeeping – the New Zealand Honey Producers' Association, the Internal Marketing Division, and the Honey Marketing Authority. I was able to demonstrate how certain recurring themes and problems in beekeeping brought about both the evolution and the demise of these organisations. Variability in crop yields from season to season, and unstable domestic and international prices,

create a climate of uncertainty. I undertook the thesis postulating that the 'honey industry' might be strategically placed to capitalise on the global environment due to a history of improvising on the part of members in the face of uncertainty. I set out to explore how economies of scope, rather than economies of scale, achieved through product differentiation and value-added products could lever competitive advantages to players.

Moreover, I realised government was re-negotiating its role in beekeeping, and that the National Pest Management Strategy for the eradication of American Foulbrood in beehives (the 'PMS') had recently been developed and was about to be implemented. [If I were undertaking further research in the industry, the PMS would probably take central stage. The fate of the strategy and how it unfolds in practice is, I believe, of utmost importance in understanding the science/craft interface in beekeeping.] This state of flux was one of the key reasons why I commenced the research: Beekeeping is seen as the first private sector industry to actually develop its own Pest Management Strategy, and the Strategy itself is only the second PMS to be put into operation.

While information and communication technologies may be pivotal in the global marketplace; I was initially unaware that electronic mail distribution lists were available to players. I knew of the existence of the New Zealand Beekeeping homepage, having accidentally come across it while researching for the honours dissertation, and recall being amazed that such a development existed in beekeeping. The homepage presented a professional and contemporary image of New Zealand beekeeping, and this counteracted my perceptions of 'beekeepers'. Nevertheless, it was through the homepage that I first corresponded with the list administrator, and he was my first point of contact with beekeeping in a researcher capacity.

When I first subscribed to the 'NZBkprs' distribution list, I had little notion of what an electronic distribution list was, what the implications of my joining 'the list' might be, and, consequently, harboured few expectations as to how information technologies might subsequently shape my research. I had stumbled upon the beekeeping distribution lists through no conscious

endeavour of my own; it was unintended and unexpected on my part, yet emerged as highly productive for the research. The significance of 'the list' became apparent as a form of counter organisation in relation to the NBA; although, while 'the wasps' have concocted this shadow organisation, it is these actors who resolutely adhere to the 'NBA rules' and prescribed procedures. They wish to be a part of the *formal* organisation, and are using information and communication technologies to achieve this. With insight and prompting from a supervisor, I delved into unfamiliar territory: namely, literature on information and communication technologies.

My first planned course of action was securing access to the National Beekeepers' Association through the Executive Secretary, and publishing an article outlining my proposed course of research in the Association's journal, *The New Zealand Beekeeper*. I was well received by the Executive Secretary and the article was published in full, albeit with a couple of lines in one paragraph missing. Through enlisting the support and assistance of the National Executive I believed I would gain access to a range of players, and more importantly, be able to penetrate the *national* setting. I suspected that players regarded the NBA as 'the industry', and conceived it as providing the 'primary locale' in which "recurring (economic) themes and problems of beekeeping...are played out" (per thesis proposal).

Thus, I recognised the national setting as "an arena in which...actors were engaging in struggles for meaning and control", and saw the National Executive occupying "a strategic or pivotal position as liaison or broker in respect of the state and individual honey producers" (per thesis proposal). The thesis proposal suggested,

...the first stage of the research process will be attending meetings and other events...to interact with those present and to engage in informal talks. It is recognised that these functions bring together the vast array of actors involved in the 'honey industry'. In this sense they represent significant locales in which top-down forms of intervention and bottom-up sources of innovation intersect.



I believed such an approach would provide a point from which to conceive the infinity of cross-cutting ties connecting differently placed actors and organisations making up 'the honey industry'. In the final piece, the NBA assumes a position of centrality, and the issue becomes one of control and censorship in organising craft through a *nationally* constituted *producers'* association.

It transpired that placing an article in the *The New Zealand Beekeeper* was a productive course of action in terms of gaining participants for my research; even though the main objective had been to advise players of my presence and purpose at National Conference. I fielded a number of inquiries from players, mainly exporters and marketers, commending the article and was able to conduct phone interviews with these players. Significant numbers of players whom I subsequently encountered in Branch settings and at National Conference had also read the article.

The article intimated I would be employing a case study of the Canterbury Branch. At the time, I presumed it would provide sufficient notice of my research intentions to Branch members, and that there would be some communication between National Executive and the regional Branch concerning my presence at Branch meetings. To be sure, I telephoned the Secretary of the Branch to advise of my intentions and to confirm time and place a few days prior to the first Branch meeting I planned to attend. This information was apparently passed on to the Branch President who introduced me very formally at the meeting, and asked me to speak to my project. At a subsequent date, when I contacted the President offering my assistance for the Branch's forthcoming honey promotion, he admitted to "feeling in the dark" concerning my research. This immediately told me something of the relationship between regional Branches and 'head office'. I was glad I had offered my assistance and arranged to send him an information sheet pertaining to my research.

With the benefit of hindsight, I realise that regional branches enjoy considerable autonomy and room for manoeuvre in relation to the National body, and that I should have been more diligent contacting and informing

Branch representatives of my intentions and requesting permission. Communication between regional Branches and 'national office' seems to be inconsistent and spasmodic. In some cases a 'them versus us' mentality operates. The presence of Executive players as Branch members in the regional settings arguably promotes discourse and disclosure between the National Executive and Branch members, at the same time as it creates controversies and conflict.

What eventuated in the course of doing the research was an unexpected way of presenting interpenetrating aspects of structure and agency which I had in *theory* recognised, but had yet to embody in *practice*. There was also the realisation that I needed to do this. The thesis evolved in terms of how I approached the data and the ways I presented it. To use Bourdieu's and Wacquant's words, I attempted retrospectively to give "myself the means of reintroducing into the analysis the consciousness of the presuppositions and prejudices associated with the local and localized point of view" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:254). Bourdieu's intention with his concept of *fields*,

is to escape from under the philosophy of the subject but without doing away with the agent...as well as from under the philosophy of the structure but without forgetting to take into account the effects it wields upon and through the agent" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:122).

It follows that traditional dichotomies between subject and object, the macro and micro, the external and internal, the conscious and the unconscious, and the body and the mind, are broken down in practice and reworked (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:19). I therefore sought to capture the "mastery that agents acquire of their social world by way of durable immersion with it...and which defines properly human social practice" (ibid.).

Applying such a philosophy is both an empirical and theoretical endeavour, and I became immersed in, and a part of, the fields of play. Immersion in the fields necessitated adopting "an active and systematic posture vis-a-vis 'facts'" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:233), and being alert to the presentation of data which had "every chance of being the product of

the object [of analysis] itself" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:235). Just as the rhetoric of players in and across the fields produced and embodied processes of censorship, my thesis resonates similar processes in terms of my own positioning in the respective fields and my outsider status as a social scientist. Ideas, hints, comments, and suggestions, fed into the research on the part of my two supervisors, injected a level of 'detached' objectification. Law (1994) advises that,

(w)riting is work, ordering work. It is another part of the process of ordering. It grows out of a context. It is an effect of that context. But it then tends to go on to hide that context (1994:31).

Writing in this 'new' way was something I had difficulty with – both practically and philosophically. Writing in a way that *is* post-structural and not deliberately theoretical is a great deal more difficult than espousing theory about it, and I am anxious about my work appearing 'fictional' and descriptive. The task of the scientist, according to Bourdieu and Wacquant, "consists in grasping a hidden reality which veils itself by unveiling itself, which offers itself to observers only in the anecdotal form of the interaction that conceals it" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:256). They note that,

depending on what object she studies, the sociologist herself is more or less distant from the agents and the stakes she observes, more or less directly involved in rivalries with them, and consequently more or less tempted to enter the game of metadiscourse under the cloak of objectivity....One must in a sense renounce the use of science to intervene in the object in order to be in a position to carry out an objectivation which is...the all-encompassing view that one acquires of a game that can be grasped as such because one has retired from it (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:259).

Bourdieu advises against "searching the productions of habitus for more logic than they actually contain...[as] the logic of practice is logical up to the point where to be logical would cease being practical (Bourdieu, 1987a:96, in Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:22-23).

Hence, Bourdieu and Wacquant observe how the use of language is problematic for sociologists, and that it may be necessary to present research in a seemingly 'unscientific' fashion:

language poses a particularly dramatic problem for the sociologist: it is in effect an immense repository of naturalized preconstructions, and thus of preconstructions that are ignored as such and which can function as unconscious instruments of construction (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:241)...(I)t is often necessary, in order to produce science, to forgo the appearances of scientificity, even if to contradict the norms in currency and to challenge ordinary criteria of scientific rigor...[and] take the risk of not displaying all the outward signs of scientificity (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:246).

They advocate, consistent with feminist analyses, incorporating the 'researcher' him/herself into the research: Accounting for the researcher's ambitions, experiences, shortcomings, and so forth in doing the research. Indeed, my shifting identities and positions in the beekeeping fields were mirrored in 'multiple' audiences for the thesis. I was undertaking the research to attain a Masters of Arts degree, and to contribute to sociological knowledge through deploying beekeeping as an empirical case to illustrate and expand sociological theories.

Throughout the research, I was, nevertheless, conscious of writing for 'beekeepers'. I wanted to provide a piece that was both interesting, relevant, and useful to ordinary beekeepers; yet which did not embody the appearance of an *outsider* pronouncing on what they were doing, and telling them how they should better go about doing it. I desired to present my work in order to equip beekeepers with a "sociological imagination"; empowering them to understand the ways in which they are ordering themselves and organising beekeeping by looking at events they normally take for granted in a new light. Hence, I needed to present my research in a way that was relatively accessible to these players, and at the same time was thought-provoking and liberating.

Law attempts to overcome writing as ordering by attempting to extricate processes of ordering in his own work. He does this by introducing

several authorial voices, rather than a single voice. In this way, he claims to be “empowering rather than disempowering both ‘subjects’ and readers” (Law, 1994:33). His object “is to explore ways of moving towards a locally rigorous sense of the ordering of overlaps, a place where bits and pieces, whatever comes to hand, may be woven together” (Law, 1994:33). It may be that multiple voices emerge out of, and are intrinsic to, my thesis due to shifting identities and writing for different audiences. However, I believe that reordering the thesis chapters several times has resulted in a loss of vividness, and contrast between different voices which had existed in earlier versions. It had been my original intention, for instance, to contain methodological issues within and across the chapters; rather than collating these into a separate piece as a separate chapter.

Due to the complexity of the fields, and the relationships between beekeeping fora, it was extremely difficult deciding what material to incorporate and exclude from each chapter. The chapters comprise distinct, yet overlapping, sets of relations between various players whose ordering strategies cut across the fora and are also shaped by them. Consequently, the chapters could be ordered and reordered in a number of different ways to illuminate different strategies and to adopt different templates of what was going on. It was also difficult determining how to present the material in meaningful ways to elucidate and clarify the theoretical points I wished to make, at the same time as retaining the chronological sequence of events. Earlier versions of chapters, especially National Conference, contained considerable descriptive material and presented events more rigidly in the order in which they occurred. This was problematic in terms of tracing relations between players, and the tactical manoeuvres of individuals and groups; rather than focusing on individual events.

The descriptive material had ranged from depictions of physical settings where various meetings and functions were staged to comprehensive accounts of social events and humorous episodes. This sort of information, I believe, painted a complete picture of the dynamics of the fields and of the quirks of individual players participating in and across beekeeping fora. Nevertheless, it provided too much detail for an academic audience. As a

result of the removal of this material, the final thesis embraces an audience more familiar with particular sociological and anthropological literature. It is hoped, though, that this methodology has captured and retained some of the vigour and enthusiasm of players contesting their interests in beekeeping and ordering themselves in and across the various settings.

## CONCLUSION

This methodology has recounted how my thesis evolved as an exercise in multi-sited research, immersing me with the players and materials I chose to study in different ways and across different settings. It has explored ways in which I sought to account for my objectives as a social scientist, my social background, and my personal dispositions. Together, these shaped my research endeavours. The ways in which 'subjects' treated me as both an 'insider' and 'outsider' presented consequences for what I was seeking to discover because it often meant I became a participant in beekeeping just like other players. I was treated with multiple identities and shifting capacities, and was constantly positioned and repositioned by players in and across socio-spatial locations. Thus, who I was or who I was seen to be by differently embedded players was critically important.

It was expected that the methodology would re-live some of the moments of anguish, humour, tedium, fascination, immersion, and withdrawal that were part of doing the fieldwork and engaging with players who were at once familiar and unfamiliar. The discussion was intended to illuminate tactical manoeuvres and strategies of different players as they responded to me in ways which would delve deeper into field dynamics and relations between individuals and sets of players participating in beekeeping fora. It was also intended to account for a change in focus and presentation of the thesis in light of the above processes, and to elaborate on how and why I initially sought to conduct my research. Moreover, the methodology has contemplated some of the ethical dilemmas encountered in doing the research, especially in terms of managing my relationship with my father, a second generation beekeeper in Mid Canterbury who was in attendance at

National Conference and Canterbury Branch meetings. Finally, the methodological discussion has enlightened how I discovered 'beekeeping' through discovering variability in *craft* practice.

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